

John Savitt

Drawer 137

71.2009.085.02652

Fernando



Digitized by the Internet Archive  
in 2012 with funding from  
Friends of the Lincoln Financial Collection in Indiana

<http://archive.org/details/assassixxxxxxx00linc>

# The Assassination of Abraham Lincoln

John Surratt

Excerpts from newspapers and other  
sources

From the files of the  
Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection

JOHN H. SURRATT. The movements of this accomplice of Booth since the assassination are thus described in a Washington despatch to the Philadelphia Inquirer:

We learn that John Surratt left Washington the morning after the murder, at 6:15 A. M., going via Philadelphia and New York to Springfield, Mass., where he was delayed by trains missing connection, and remained all day. He then took the cars and went direct to Burlington, where, in getting his supper, he dropped his handkerchief, with his name marked upon it; at St. Albans he left the train and proceeded on foot to Canada, where he went part way by rail and part on foot to Montreal, where he was secreted by some of the sympathizers, and on the morning of the 20th he had an interview with George N. Sanders. He then left and went in the direction of a monastery. He was known to be in that vicinity that day, and cannot since be found or heard of. It is probable that he is within their walls.

---





The Conspirators: Center, Mrs. Mary E. Surratt; Left, Top to Bottom, Booth, Atzerodt, Arnold and Spangler; Right, Top to Bottom, Payne, Herold, O'Laughlin and John Surratt



The president communicated to the house to day the correspondence on the arrest of John H. Surratt. It is very voluminous, and relieves Mr. Seward of the imputation that he had neglected to use proper exertions to secure the arrest of the fugitive.

Under date of Liverpool, Sept. 22, Mr. Wilding informs Mr. Seward that Surratt had arrived, or was expected to arrive in that city. He enclosed the affidavit of a person whose name is not made known, but whom it appears was a confident of Surratt's, stating the particulars of his voyage from Canada. Surratt confessed that he had been in the confederate service, and his special business was to convey intelligence from Washington to Richmond. He also avowed that the plan to kidnap and carry off President Lincoln was concocted by himself and J. Wilkes Booth. He says he arrived in Canada before the assassination of Lincoln, and while there received a letter from Booth saying it had become necessary to change their plans, and requesting him to at once come to Washington; but he did not say whether he returned there; but said on his way back to Canada the train was delayed at St. Catharines, and while sitting at the breakfast table, he named the assassination of Mr. Lincoln, and that he replied that it was too good to be true. The gentleman took a newspaper from his pocket and read an account of the occurrence, and he was surprised at finding his own name. He immediately left. On Sunday evening he related a long conversation held with Mr. — at Richmond, and I said 'You have told me a great story. Now sir, what must I call your name?' He promptly answered Surratt. This was before he arrived at Londonderry. I have not seen Surratt since, but I believe he is in Liverpool.

Under date of Sept. 30, Mr. Wilding says: 'Since my dispatch of the 23d inst. the supposed Surratt has arrived in Liverpool, but Mr. Adams advises me that, under the present evidence of identity and complicity, it would not be politic to cause his arrest. In conversation with —, of —, Surratt declared that he hoped he would live long enough yet to give an account of President Johnson.'

Under date of Oct. 13, 1865, Mr. Hunter, assistant secretary of state, writes that on consultation with the secretary of war and Judge Advocate Holt, it is not thought advisable to take any steps for the arrest of the supposed Surratt at present.

Mr. King, under date of April 3, 1866, writes to Mr. Seward that John Surratt had enlisted in the Papal Zouaves, and had admitted that his true name was Surratt, and acknowledged his participation in plotting against the life of President Lincoln. He declared that he had never seen Jeff. Davis, but it was understood that he incited or was party to the plot. Mr. King said Surratt appeared to be well supplied with money, and appealed to him not to betray his secret. The informant expresses an earnest desire that if any steps be taken toward reclaiming Surratt as a criminal, that his name should not be known in the matter.

On May 17, 1866, Mr. Seward informed Mr. Stanton of the receipt of the for-

eign information, and laid before him Mr. King's letter detailing all the facts.

On May 19 Mr. Stanton acknowledges the receipt of the documents, and says he had referred the same to Judge Advocate Holt, who advises him that the full statements of the informant be secured and verified under oath, and afterwards, the proper steps be taken for the arrest of the criminal.

On May 20, Mr. Seward suggests to the secretary of war that as we have no extradition treaty with the papal states, a special agent be sent to demand the return of Surratt.

Under date of Rome, June 30, Mr. King states he had another conversation with —, which confirms him in the belief of the statement which his informant had committed to writing. Surratt had confessed his own complicity and his mother's. The witness says he was at one time a teacher in the village of Texas, Md., and declares himself prepared to go to the United States. He still wishes his name concealed, fearing that his life would be endangered if divulged. Surratt also remarked to him that he was in New York, ready to fly when the assassination took place, and he does not regret what took place.

On July 7, Mr. King returns to Mr. Seward the above statements against Mr. Surratt, properly sworn to by the informant.

Under date of Rome, Aug. 8, Mr. King says he explained the whole affair to the authorities in Rome, when his eminence expressed himself as greatly interested, and intimated that if the American government desired a surrender of the criminal, there would probably be no difficulty in the way.

On Oct. 16, Mr. Seward enclosed to Mr. King a photograph of Mr. Surratt, and suggests that a competent person be selected to visit Velletri and compare the photograph with the supposed criminal. He also suggests that proper compensation be allowed, and requests him to seek the information whether his holiness would surrender Surratt, or whether he would be willing to enter into a general extradition treaty. Mr. King was advised that neither Surratt or — should be arrested until a full investigation of the matter, and time to make a demand for them.

Under date of Rome Nov. 4, Mr. King says he had a full interview with Cardinal Antonelli, who promptly responded that he would give up Surratt upon proper inducement and proof, at the request of the U. S., if the latter government would do likewise under parallel circumstances. Mr. King also replied that he would like a confidential person to compare Surratt's photograph with the supposed criminal.

On Nov. 10, Cardinal Antonelli apprised Mr. King that Surratt, or Watson, had

been arrested by his (the cardinal's) orders, but on the way to Rome had escaped from a guard of six men. The cardinal expressed great regret at Surratt's escape. [All the orders of the papal government, and the reports of the papal officials, concerning the arrest and escape, were inclosed.]

On Nov. 17, Mr. King and Assistant Secretary of the Navy, Fox, sent word to Minister Harvey, at Lisbon, to direct Admiral Goldsboro to send a U. S. vessel to Civita Vecchia, upon important business.

Under date of Florence, Nov. 18, Mr. Marsh reports that he had, immediately upon his arrival from Naples, had an interview with the secretary general of the minister of foreign affairs, and asked him if he thought the government would surrender Surratt if he should be found in Italian territory. The secretary replied that he believed Surratt would be surrendered by that government on a proper demand of the U. S. and proof of the identity of the criminal; but that this would probably be done only under the stipulations on the part of the U. S. authorities that the punishment of death should not be inflicted on the criminal so surrendered. The consul Gen. Howard, reports that Surratt had been hunted for at Naples, and it had been ascertained that under the name of Walters he had, the day before, proceeded in the regular steamer to Alexandria, Egypt. Mr. King therefore telegraphed to Consul Hale, at Alexandria, to arrest Surratt upon his arrival.

Under date of Dec. 2, Consul Hale telegraphed to Mr. Seward that he had arrested John H. Surratt at Alexandria.

Mr. Seward telegraphed to Consul Hale, under date of Dec. 3, that his course is approved, and measures have been taken to bring Surratt home.

Mr. Seward under date of Dec. 4, telegraphs Consul Hale that the secretary of the navy has instructed Admiral Goldsboro to bring Surratt home, and directs Consul Hale to deliver him to Admiral Goldsboro.



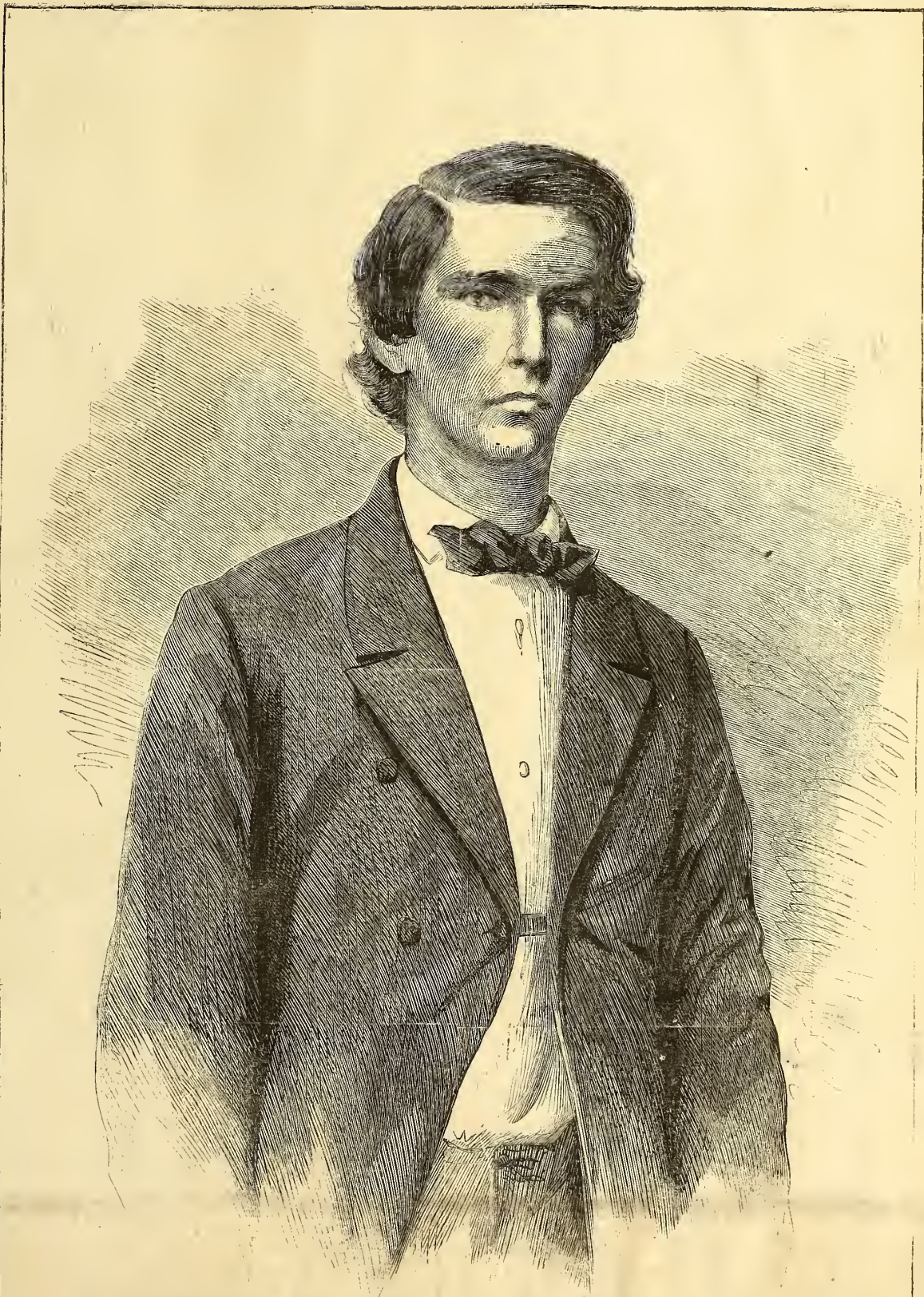
## JOHN H. SURRETT.

AFTER twenty months of successful evasion, JOHN H. SURRETT, the chief accomplice of BOOTH in the assassination of President LINCOLN, has been captured. The history of his movements since his escape to Canada, and also of his capture, were given in our last Number.

SURRETT is a man chiefly noticeable for his criminality. So obscure as to easily hide himself, by the aid of a few friends, from the eyes of the world; so ignorant that we almost wonder at the shrewdness of some of his devices, it is his capture alone, and the means thus furnished of reaching the secret history of LINCOLN's murder, that make him once more a prominent object of interest.

SURRETT, though so great a coward that he deserted his mother in the hour of her most pressing need, yet showed himself capable of the most desperate actions when these were necessary to his own safety. He had boasted frequently of his crime, and appeared to think that the world not only forgave, but admired his atrocity. He was therefore greatly surprised when he was arrested at Feroli, in Italy. He was cast into prison, from which he managed to effect his escape by plunging down a ravine, making a leap of 23 feet. Had he leaped a little further he would have fallen into an abyss, and by a sudden death have escaped a more ignominious fate. Wounded by his fall, he succeeded in reaching a hospital, where he lay for a few days; but again took up his flight and sailed for Egypt, where he was again captured by Mr. HALE.

Probably the trial of SURRETT will go far toward revealing the whole secret of the conspiracy in which he was so prominent. In his conversations he has hinted at the connection of JEFF DAVIS with the assassination, and of other persons in New York and London who gave him pecuniary assistance. Our portrait, we believe, is from the photograph which was used by the Government in identifying SURRETT.



JOHN H. SURRETT.—[PHOTOGRAPHED BY A. GARDNER, WASHINGTON, D. C.]



### John H. Surratt.

Nearly eighteen months have passed since the death of the principal conspirators in the assassination of Abraham Lincoln, and still the plot remains a mystery. A bright theatre—Death leaping on the scene—a wounded man at bay in a Virginia barn, defying his pursuers, and shot by the blunder of a soldier—a sick man's bed, and the assassin with his knife at his throat—the secret consultation of murderers, coming and going under various names and disguises—these are the figures in that terrible picture, in which, like those of Rembrandt, vast shadows enshroud a fierce and lurid light. The gallows, with four corpses, and one of them a woman—the Dry Tortugas, where four convicts expiate in wretched solitude their crimes—a quiet grave far away in Illinois—these are its companion pictures, and yet there is one more terrible. It is that of a man flying from the land where he was born; flying from the avenger death, from the body of his victim, from the corpse of his mother on the scaffold, seeking in vain to loose himself in the great world, and to blot his name from the memory of man. This is John Harrison Surratt, of whose equal guilt in the crime there is no doubt, and by whom, it is believed, much that is hidden may be revealed.

The evidence taken before the Military Commission in June 1865, proved John H. Surratt to be one of the principal conspirators. It was at the house of his mother that the meetings were held; up to the week of the assassination he had been journeying between Richmond and Montreal; Booth was his constant companion; Mudd concealed him in the woods near his house; Payne consulted with him; Atzerodt confessed that Surratt induced him to join the conspiracy; one Nott, a retel, when he heard of the murder, it was sworn, exclaimed: "My God! John Surratt knew all about this, and do you suppose he is going to stay in Washington and let them catch him?" His name was the first in the indictment. Had there been any doubt of his guilt his flight would have removed it, for though none of the principals were more frequently seen up to the 13th of April, on the afternoon of the 14th he was seen for the last time, booted and spurred, ready for his escape. From that time the very existence of John Surratt was a mystery; it was believed he was dead; that he had revealed the names of his fellow conspirators to the government, and had been allowed to escape; that he was secretly imprisoned. It was noted that no reward was offered for his arrest. Yet, as time passed on, John Surratt was forgotten till the other day came the startling news that he had been arrested by the American Consul General in Egypt.

De Quincey, in illustration of the vast empire and power of the Romans, imagines a fugitive from the vengeance of the Emperor, vainly seeking to escape his grasp North, South, East or West.—wherever the wretched man may fly, he treads within the circle of Rome, and her hand is raised above him; though he fly

to the uttermost parts of the earth, Caesar will be before him. In this age, Justice is hard to escape. The great criminal hides in vain in foreign lands, changes his name or disguises his person. Surratt's person was not very easy to disguise. A tall man, with a prominent forehead, and very large nose, with deeply sunken eyes and long black hair. Thus he was described at the trial.

Of his wanderings, little is known. It is said that he was recognized on a Liverpool steamer shortly after the murder. Then came a rumor that he was serving as a private soldier in Pope's Guard at Rome. We know now that he had been a soldier in the Papal Zouaves at Veroli, and served under the name of John Watson. The fact became known to Mr. Rufus King, our minister at Rome, who telegraphed to our Government, and was instructed to secure his arrest. Mr. King conferred with Cardinal Antonelli, who issued an order for his seizure. Surratt was taken; he was imprisoned; and on removal from jail, guarded by five soldiers, broke from their hands, jumped, it is said, over a precipice more than 100 feet high, and escaped into the Italian territory. Mr. Marsh, our Minister at Florence, obtained telegraphic instructions from the Italian Government to have all the seaports of Italy watched to prevent his escape. He was soon supposed to have embarked in a steamer for Malta, and a dispatch to that Island arrived too late to detain him; another was sent to Alexandria, and when Surratt stepped upon the shores of Egypt, he was seized by the strong, far reaching arm of America. United States detectives, it is said have watched him since October.—But long before this he must have been overtaken by a speedier, surer foe. Fear was ever at his back; from remorse he could hardly escape, for even if he could forget the crime he had committed, how could he ever cease to see the phantom of his mother on the gallows? Coward all the world believed him, since that day when he fled and left her to suffer; a coward, it was said, she held him, and in her last moments refused to hear his name.

There is true dramatic interest in this imperfect history. The escape and pursuit of no other criminal in this century has so much to excite the imagination.—No man, it is possible, not even Booth, worked harder to accomplish the murder; and a deeper interest is given to his share in the conspiracy by his frequent journeys to Richmond. Upon Surratt's presumed connection with the rebel government, Andrew Johnson charged Jefferson Davis with complicity in the assassination. New revelations are expected from this trial; the public may be disappointed in that, yet if John Surratt could be induced to confess, before the death which is almost certain to be his fate, there is no reasonable doubt but that he might tell the whole story of Lincoln's assassination from the beginning to the end.—N. Y. Tribune.



### Surratt.—His Final Arrest in Egypt.

WASHINGTON, December 10.—The correspondence sent to the House to-day, touching the arrest of John H. Surratt, covers about one hundred foolscap pages. It establishes, conclusively, that the State Department has known Surratt's whereabouts since early last May, thus verifying the assertion made by Gov. Boutwell. The correspondence includes letters from Consul General Potter, of Montreal, our Consul at Liverpool, Ministers King, Marsh and Harvey, Consul General Hale, of Egypt, &c. It appears from the papers that Surratt spent some time, after the assassination, in Canada, at Three Rivers, being protected by the Catholic denomination, though it is not known that his identity was known to them. Thence he went to Londonderry, Ireland, and was for a while in the Catholic oratory of that city, leaving there for Rome early in the present year. At Rome he enlisted in the Papal Zouaves, serving in that body until arrested in November. The correspondence shows that the Government has the names of various vessels in which he sailed from point to point and generally a tolerably full account of his journeyings, and disasters. Among the papers is a statement from a person (name withheld) who crossed the Atlantic with him, and who communicates through the Consul at Liverpool. Surratt was then passing under the name of Macarty. He admitted to this witness that Booth and himself originated the assassination conspiracy, and intimated, without actually saying so, that Jeff Davis is privy thereto. He claimed that he was in New York the night the murder was committed, on his way to Canada. He owned to making frequent trips between Richmond, Washington and Canada, and said his business was well known to many persons in Richmond. He expressed great satisfaction at the death of Lincoln. His hair and whiskers were dyed, and he seemed plentifully supplied with money. His general appearance was so changed that it was almost impossible to recognize him, and although the Consul at Liverpool knew his exact whereabouts while in England, he slipped away before his identity could be established. Such observation had been kept of his actions that it was known on the day he shipped that he was bound for Rome. Minister King was properly advised.

The story of his identification and arrest in Italy is very interesting. It appears that on the 22d day of April, a man whose name is also withheld, called on Mr. King and stated that he had known Surratt in Washington and Maryland, and that he was then under the name of John Watson, serving in the Papal Zouaves. The Minister was surprised, and at first could hardly believe the story. His informant was closely questioned, however, and Mr. King finally concluded that he was telling the truth.—The report was sent to Mr. Seward, and a long correspondence between Messrs. Seward, Hale, Stanton and King, followed. The full statement of the witness was taken down, showing that he had been a school teacher in Prince George county, Maryland; that he knew Surratt, Welchman, Mrs. Surratt, and others of that circle, and that he was well informed relative to all Surratt's affairs. He said Surratt had told him of the conspiracy; had admitted his mother's guilt, had expressed satisfaction at Lincoln's murder, had given him to understand that Davis was implicated, and had expressed his purpose to return to New York in a year or two. A photograph of Surratt was sent from this country, and Mr. King

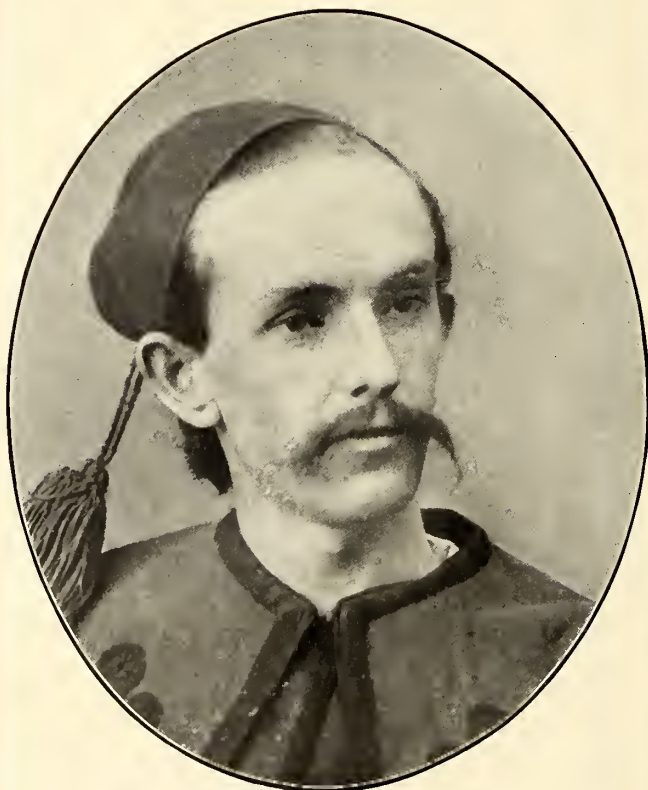
employed a discreet person to compare his features with those of the Papal soldier, and the identity of Surratt, then passing as Watson, was thus fully established.

Two or three interviews had taken place between Mr. King and Cardinal Antonelli, and the Cardinal was fully informed of Mr. King's knowledge, suspicions and plans.—We have no Extradition Treaty with the Pope, and could not therefore demand Surratt. Orders were, however, given by the Cardinal, while the investigation was going on, that neither the criminal nor the witness, who was also in the Papal service, should be discharged without specific directions. Mr. King, by Mr. Seward's instructions, asked if Mr. Surratt would be delivered up on the proper indictment and proof, and he was promptly answered in the affirmative. The Cardinal seems from the beginning to have most promptly seconded the efforts of our Government in the matter, and he himself ordered the arrest of Surratt, as soon as his identity had been fully established and the necessary legal steps had been taken.

The fact of his arrest and escape from a guard of six men is already known. The orders of the Papal authorities, and the regular reports of the Papal military officers touching the matter, are included in the correspondence. The Cardinal expressed great regret at Surratt's escape. The most vigilant efforts were at once resorted to for his re-arrest. He was traced to a hospital at Sara, and thence to Naples, passing in the latter city under the name of Walters. He escaped from Naples before he could be arrested. The authorities knew he had taken the steamer for Alexandria, and the necessary information and suggestions were at once sent to Consul General Hale. Assistant Naval Secretary Fox had reached Rome about this time, and he and Mr. King sent word to Admiral Goldsborough, through Minister Harvey at Lisbon, to despatch one of his vessels of war into the Eastern Mediterranean.

Mr. Hale effected Surratt's arrest, as soon as the vessel on which he sailed from Naples reached Alexandria, and at once advised Mr. Seward. Orders were sent to Admiral Goldsborough, by Secretary Welles, and Mr. Hale's course was approved by the Secretary of State, who directed him to deliver Surratt to the Captain of our war vessel.

It is expected that he will soon be on his way to this country. The person who gave information that he was in the Papal service has been released from that body, and will also come to this country as a witness against Surratt. Some comment is made among those who have seen the correspondence, by one remark made by Surratt on his arrival in England. It was that he hoped to live long enough to be able to give a good account of President Johnson.



JOHN H. SURRATT.  
(In Uniform of Papal Zouave.)

ESCAPED CONSPIRATOR



### John H. Surratt. 1867

As Surratt sits in court with his hat removed, we see his face more clearly. A small head, long, glossy, light brown hair, brushed up from a full fair brow, small, aquiline nose, so hollow at its parting from the forehead that a child's finger laid across would hardly fill the indentation; eyes grey, deep set, near together, earnest, secretive, but with a good deal of composure, gained perhaps in so long daring fate to do its worst; mouth weak, half hidden by light auburn moustache; and a long narrow pointed tuft of beard pendant from the narrow chin. The face is almost a triangle, narrowing down regularly from the forehead on each side to the pointed chin.

So the young prisoner sits, slowly moving a palm fan, noticing each little detail in lawyer, witness and spectator, usually serene, sometimes smiling, through the summer days, while the scales vibrate, weighing his life or death. What memories must crowd upon him! His youth at the Jesuit College; his deep zeal for the rebel cause; his long night journeys, with information, from Washington to Richmond; then with money and messages from Richmond to Montreal; running pickets; shot at by scouts; sad partings and glad meetings with his betrothed, who waits here to take stand and give her woman's voice for his life; the long Canadian hiding, going out only by night and in priestly vestures; tidings of the trial and execution of his familiars; of the impending fate of his mother—for human nature's sake his counsel should prove their assertion that he desired to come and save her, but was not allowed to; then of her ignominious death; the secret ocean passage; the concealments in England and France, the half year's service as a common soldier; talking everywhere of the one great subject that filled his thoughts; his arrest at the little Italian village; his leap of 37 feet over the parapet to escape, with the connivance of his guards; his flight to Naples; then up the Mediterranean; no permanent refuge—no rest for the sole of his foot; his landing at Alexandria to find the file of Janissaries waiting to arrest him again and St. Marie, like an avenger of blood, standing by to identify him. Then ship board, prison, manacles, and this long waiting for the verdict.—*N. Y. Tribune.*

THE SURRETT TRIAL—has ended. The jury failing to agree, was discharged. The jury was divided, eight for acquittal and 4 for conviction: 8. 18. 67

### John Surratt Arrested in Egypt.

Washington, Dec. 2.

Secretary Seward received this evening the following highly important dispatch by the Atlantic cable: 1866

'Alexandria, Egypt, Dec. 1.

I have arrested John H. Surratt, one of the assassins of President Lincoln.

CHAS A. HALE, Consul Genl.'

Washington, May 27.

The trial of John H. Surratt, on motion of the government counsel, was postponed until the 18th of June in order to afford time to procure the attendance of several important witnesses. U. S. Attorney Carrington and Judge Pierpont briefly argued in favor of the postponement of continuance of the case till another time. Several important witnesses were absent. Efforts had been made to secure them, but without success. Witnesses were in different places. New facts had also recently been discovered and new developments of importance made in the case.—The court, after consideration of the subject, said the case would be postponed two weeks from to day in order to afford further time to procure the attendance of witnesses. 1867

In the supreme court of the District of Columbia Nov. 6th, the case of John Surratt came up. The motion being to dismiss the appeal of the District Attorney from the decision of Judge Wylie in the criminal court, sustaining the plea of the statute of limitations and discharging the prisoner, the court, Judges Carter, Olin and Wylie dismissed the appeal, on the ground that there was no precedent for suspending an appeal in a case where judgment had been rendered in the criminal court in favor of the defendant. This is the end of the Surratt case. 11. 17. 1868

The Surratt trial is now progressing at Washington. The evidence is not very strong against him, and his counsel assert that they will be able to prove a clear alibi. 7. 2. 67

## A Romantic Figure in the Lincoln Assassination Spoiled.

The evidence for the defendant in the Surratt trial now progressing at Washington, is spoiling a great many beautiful, tho' horrible scenes connected with the tragedy. One of the most romantic in the affair, was that wherein a confederate of the assassin approached the door of the theatre, and called the time of night, in order, as was supposed, to enable Booth to strike at the proper time.

The evidence of two witnesses is as follows, upon this point: *7. 18. 1867*

Jas. G. Gifford testified—on the night of the assassination witness was out in front at the end of the second and third acts; he went through the stage entrance on the south side of the theatre; did not see Booth that night; knew Booth from his boyhood; never saw Surratt until I saw him here; saw a gentleman come down and call the time; he was connected with the theatre; he came down from F street; he was to go on that night for a song and asked Mr. Canlin what time it was and Canlin stepped up and looked at the clock, saying it was ten minutes past ten; he stopped there a few minutes and then went it; other persons had been standing around at the time but if Booth had been there witness would have noticed him.

C. V. Hess sworn—witness resides in Philadelphia; in 1865 was connected with the company performing at Ford's theatre; was assigned a song after "American Cousin" that night which was to be performed for the President; was in front of the theatre during the evening, talking with Gifford and Canlin; was standing opposite the stage entrance; went back into the theatre after talking with them; asked them what time it was; Canlin replied, "ten minutes past ten," witness replied, repeating the words that "he would be wanted in a few minutes," and went on the stage, and two minutes afterwards heard the report of a pistol; never saw prisoner till now; did not see him the night of the assassination.

And so we learn that the interesting scene painted by the imaginations of the radical enthusiasts, was caused by one of the actors going out to get a drink, and being informed by a friend of the time, in order that he might be ready in time to sing a comic song for the President!



The evidence taken by the house Judiciary Committee relative to the discovery and pursuit of John H. Surratt is just made public, as officially reported before the committee and contains testimony embracing a partial confession from Surratt as to his complicity in the assassination plot, and of his much disputed whereabouts on the day the assassination took place. It appears from the evidence of L. J. McMillan, surgeon of the steamer Peruvian, plying between Montreal and Liverpool, that Surratt came on board in September, 1865, booked for Liverpool, and that, becoming an intimate, he confessed to McMillan who he was. The supplemental evidence, together with official correspondence of the State Department with our Foreign Ministers and Consuls, show that the confession of identity to McMillan was the original and sole cause which eventually led to Surratt's arrest. This corroboration leaves no room to doubt the evidence.

Dr. McMillan testifies that Surratt came on board the Peruvian at Montreal on Sept. 11, 1865, and was introduced to him under the name of McCarthy, that becoming well acquainted in a few days, Surratt confessed to him that he had been from the beginning in the Confederate States service, carrying dispatches between Washington and Richmond, and also as far as Montreal; and that he and Booth had planned at first the abduction of Abraham Lincoln; that, however, they thought they could not succeed in that way, or they thought it was necessary to change their plan. After this, before the assassination, Surratt was in Montreal when he received a letter from Booth, ordering him immediately to Washington; that it was necessary for him to act promptly, and he was to leave Montreal immediately for Washington, he did not tell me he came to Washington immediately, but he told me he came as far as Elmira, in the State of New York and telegraphed from there to New York to find out whether Booth had left for Washington, and he answered that he had. He did not tell whether he had gone further than Elmira.—The next place he spoke to me of was St. Albans, Vt., where he said he arrived early one morning at breakfast time, and went to the hotel there for breakfast. While he was sitting there he heard several talking about an assassination, and he inquired what was up. They asked him if he did not know that President Lincoln was assassinated. He said: "I did not believe it because the story was too good to be true." On that a gentleman pulled out a newspaper and showed it to him. He opened it and saw his name as one of the assassins. He said that this unnerved him so much that the paper fell out of his hands. He immediately left the room and walked out, and as he was going out through the house he heard some one say that Surratt must have been, or was at that time, in St. Albans, because such a person (mentioning the person's name) had found a pocket handkerchief on the street with Surratt's name on it.—He told me that he actually looked in his pocket and found that he had lost a pocket handkerchief. From that place he went to Canada, and was concealed there from April to September. When he was on board the ship he called me aside and again commenced to talk about the

assassination, and one thing another. It was in the evening, and we were alone together, and he took out his revolver, which he kept in his pocket all the time, and pointed to the heavens, and said he: "I hope and wish to live just a few years more. Two years more will do me, and then I will go back to the United States and I shall serve Andrew Johnson as Abraham Lincoln has been served." I asked him why, and he answered; "Because he has been the cause of my mother being hung." Dr. McMillan further testifies that he arrived in Liverpool on Sept. 27, 1865 and went before the American Consul, Mr. Wild and made an affidavit to the above facts. An official letter from Consul Wild, shows that this affidavit caused the commencement of the pursuit of Surratt, which resulted in his capture in little less than a year from that time.—May 10, 1867.

### The Surratt Trial.

In the Surratt trial, Chas. H. Wood testified that on the morning of the assassination the prisoner came to the barber shop in which he worked, in company with Booth and two other men, to be shaved and have his hair cut. It was also proven that Surratt was seen watching around Ford's Theater as the President's carriage drove up; also that he was previously seen examining the box the President was to occupy.—July 10, 1867.

The trial of Surratt is progressing. The prosecution has finished the examination. The defense will strive to prove that Surratt was absent from Washington on the night of the assassination, and to break down the character of the witness for the government. The counsel for Surratt developed a new feature of their case, by offering to prove by a rebel Gen. Lee, who claimed to have been in Canada about the time of the assassination, that Surratt was at Elmira, N. Y., on the 13th, 14th and 15th of April, 1865, as an agent for the purpose of learning the number and condition of rebel prisoners confined there and the strength of the guards etc., in other words that he was acting as a rebel spy, but the character of the testimony was faulty, and it was ruled out. Taking their own statement of his case, it would seem that he ought to have been hung as a spy, even if, as they claim, he had no immediate connection with the assassination.—August 7, 1867.

Surratt was taken out of jail Monday last for the purpose of having his photograph taken. This is the first time he has been out since his trial. He will probably soon be at liberty, as we see it stated the government intends to enter a nolle pros. in his case and let him go.—February 19, 1868.

John H. Surratt has been some years engaged as a clerk in the office of a steamboat line in Baltimore. For a considerable time during the war he was one of the secret agents of the Confederacy, and in that capacity made repeated trips between Richmond and Canada. In a recent interview, speaking of those trips, Surratt said:

"There were not many difficulties. The fact is that the North was so honeycombed by latent rebellion and resident sympathizers that the difficulty was how to avoid hospitality and accept the best aid in traversing it. There was no trouble. Once on the Maryland side, coming north, and the rest was as easy as traveling now. The same was true on the return journey, but the Potomac was closely guarded and it was a serious matter to get across. Our disguises were manifold, however and whatever dispatches we had were towed and weighted astern of the boats, so that in case of capture we could dispose of them effectively. We were, at least I was, and so were all the people engaged as agents, fired at a score of times, both by cannon and rifle, but I was not hit. Other people were occasionally less fortunate. We used to choose dark, rainy nights for our expeditions, and usually managed to avoid patrol boats. Traveling on this side was easy enough. We simply bought railway tickets and traveled as other people did, and, like other people we were let alone. It was a nasty business though, because of the apprehension we dwelt in; you can imagine that. I remember I used to take, as a rule, an evening train to Baltimore and one at 9 o'clock or so from there to Harrisburg. Then I had to wait for a train west or north, at times. I went to the bridge sometimes by way of the Reading railroad to New York via Easton and up Lake Champlain, and at others to Detroit. But we used to go regularly to Harrisburg, and we had to wait there, where the detectives were thicker than any other kind of passengers. I never made any disguises, but went about my business as one who had legitimate errands in traveling."

Speaking of his mother Surratt said: "Now let me solemnly say that I never knew that my mother was in serious danger. I deemed it only a matter of time, a few months, when she should by reason of the revulsion of public feeling, be released. In that belief I was confirmed by those about me, who insisted that she was to be discharged and kept the newspapers away from me. When I heard that she was sentenced to death I was absolutely crazy. I was restrained by force which I tried to overcome, from coming to the States, if not to save to die with her. Alas, I could not do it. I fought and plead, but those about me had their lives at stake and my return might be a clew to their place of living and they stopped me. It I had known earlier; but I did not know. I have had every conceivable unkind thing said of me. They have said that had I come forth from hiding and her and myself. I do not believe that the temper of the people would have allowed any one to be saved; but that said, "Here I am," I would have saved would not have mattered in the least. I would have come had I known. I would, as God is my judge."—Nov. 13, 1886.



### Surratt the Assassin.

The evidence taken by the house Judiciary Committee relative to the discovery and pursuit of John H. Surratt is just made public, as officially reported before the committee and contains testimony embracing a partial confession from Surratt as to his complicity in the assassination plot, and of his much disputed whereabouts on the day the assassination took place. It appears from the evidence of L. J. McMillan, surgeon of the steamer Peruvian, plying between Montreal and Liverpool, that Surratt came on board in September, 1865, booked for Liverpool, and that, becoming an intimate, he confessed to McMillan who he was. The supplemental evidence, together with official correspondence of the State Department with our Foreign Ministers and Consuls, show that the confession of identity to McMillan was the original and sole cause which eventually led to Surratt's arrest. This corroboration leaves no room to doubt the evidence.

Dr. McMillan testifies that Surratt came on board the Peruvian at Montreal on Sept. 11, 1865, and was introduced to him under the name of McCarthy, that becoming well acquainted in a few days, Surratt confessed to him that he had been from the beginning in the Confederate States service, carrying dispatches between Washington and Richmond, and also as far as Montreal; and that he and Booth had planned at first the abduction of Abraham Lincoln; that, however, they thought they could not succeed in that way, or they thought it was necessary to change their plan. After this, before the assassination, Surratt was in Montreal when he received a letter from Booth, ordering him immediately to Washington; that it was necessary for him to act promptly, and he was to leave Montreal immediately for Washington, he did not tell me he came to Washington immediately, but he told me he came as far as Elmira, in the State of New York and telegraphed from there to New York to find out whether Booth had left for Washington, and he answered that he had. He did not tell whether he had gone further than Elmira.—The next place he spoke to me of was St. Albans, Vt., where he said he arrived early one morning at breakfast time, and went to the hotel there for breakfast. While he was sitting there he heard several talking about an assassination, and he inquired what was up. They asked him if he did not know that President Lincoln was assassinated. He said: "I did not believe it because the story was too good to be true." On that a gentleman pulled out a newspaper and showed it to him. He opened it and saw his name as one of the assassins. He said that this unnerved him so much that the paper fell out of his hands. He immediately left the room and walked out, and as he was going out through the house he heard some one say that Surratt must have been, or was at that time, in St. Albans, because such a person (mentioning the person's name) had found a pocket handkerchief on the street with Surratt's name on it.—He told me that he actually looked in his pocket and found that he had lost a pocket handkerchief. From that place he went to Canada, and was concealed there from April to September. When he was on board the ship he called me aside and again commenced to talk about the assassination, and one thing another.

It was in the evening, and we were alone together, and he took out his revolver, which he kept in his pocket all the time, and pointed to the heavens, and said he: "I hope and wish to live just a few years more. Two years more will do me, and then I will go back to the United States and I shall serve Andrew Johnson as Abraham Lincoln has been served." I asked him why, and he answered; "Because he has been the cause of my mother being hung." Dr. McMillan further testifies that he arrived in Liverpool on Sept. 27, 1865 and went before the American Consul, Mr. Wild and made an affidavit to the above facts. An official letter from Consul Wild, shows that this affidavit caused the commencement of the pursuit of Surratt, which resulted in his capture in little less than a year from that time.—May 10, 1867.

### The Surratt Trial.

In the Surratt trial, Chas. H. Wood testified that on the morning of the assassination the prisoner came to the barber shop in which he worked, in company with Booth and two other men, to be shaved and have his hair cut. It was also proven that Surratt was seen watching around Ford's Theater as the President's carriage drove up; also that he was previously seen examining the box the President was to occupy.—July 10 1867.

The trial of Surratt is progressing. The prosecution has finished the examination. The defense will strive to prove that Surratt was absent from Washington on the night of the assassination, and to break down the character of the witness for the government. The counsel for Surratt developed a new feature of their case, by offering to prove by a rebel Gen. Lee, who claimed to have been in Canada about the time of the assassination, that Surratt was at Elmira, N. Y., on the 13th, 14th and 15th of April, 1865, as an agent for the purpose of learning the number and condition of rebel prisoners confined there and the strength of the guards etc., in other words that he was acting as a rebel spy, but the character of the testimony was faulty, and it was ruled out. Taking their own statement of his case, it would seem that he ought to have been hung as a spy, even if, as they claim, he had no immediate connection with the assassination.—August 7, 1867.

Surratt was taken out of jail Monday last for the purpose of having his photograph taken. This is the first time he has been out since his trial. He will probably soon be at liberty, as we see it stated the government intends to enter a nolle pros. in his case and let him go.—February 19, 1868.

115. 87  
Boston Corbett, now living in Topeka, Kan., who killed Wilkes Booth, has been committed to the state asylum. Last winter, it will be remembered, he summarily adjourned the Kansas house of representatives with a shotgun. *See*

The horse that J. Wilkes Booth rode after he assassinated President Lincoln, is in the possession of Mrs. Furlong, of Westmorland county, Virginia and the animal is about twenty-five years of age.—Dec. 7, 1883.

### A NOTED CHARACTER.

#### Spandauer, Who Aided in Convicting Mrs. Surratt, in an Unenviable Role.

A Baltimore, Md., letter to the St. Louis Globe-Democrat says: Several months ago Benjamin Spandauer, who was one of the most important agents in procuring the conviction of Mrs. Mary Surratt, in 1865, for participation in the conspiracy resulting in the assassination of President Lincoln, was arrested for alleged conspiracy in a noted divorce case here. He was indicted for alleged manufacturing of testimony. The suit was that of Mrs. Johanna Jensen against her husband. Judge Fisher decided the case in the wife's favor, and awarded her alimony. In his decision the judge said he believed the evidence submitted by her husband, for whom Spandauer was a leading witness, was a tissue of falsehoods from beginning to end. Spandauer was released on bail, and today his case came up, and State's Attorney Kerr entered a nolle pros in the case of John Jansen, the husband, who was indicted with Spandauer, and also the latter. The divorce suit has been finally settled. The state's attorney was of the opinion that the evidence in the case was not sufficient to warrant going to trial. Spandauer had several times before been arrested on similar charges. At the trial of Mrs. Mary Surratt, in May and June, 1865, Spandauer and Louis J. Weichman—the latter's evidence being corroborative—testified that Mrs. Surratt, who kept a boarding house, at which Wilkes Booth, Harold, Spangler and others met, had been frequently in the room where the conferences of the conspirators were held, and thus connected her with the plot. This was the evidence that convicted her.

For a number of years succeeding the war Spandauer and Weichman were lost sight of. Nothing more was heard of the latter until his death in Philadelphia, in great destitution, three years ago. Spandauer appeared in Baltimore about four years ago, and first loomed up to public notice again by persuading Heinrich Muhla, a German, that the latter was one of ten heirs to an estate in Germany or England, valued at \$3,000,000, and agreed to collect Muhla's share for percentage. Muhla advanced him \$100, and Spandauer in all obtained about \$1,500 from him. When Muhla found that the estate was a myth he had Spandauer arrested, and he was sent to prison for three years. Spandauer is an old man now, and not likely to figure before the public again.—Dec. 17, 1887.

(Note: The name of Spandauer does not appear in the index to names of those who testified at the celebrated "Conspiracy Trial." Weichman was the real cause of Mrs. Surratt's conviction. See list of witnesses in Ben Pittman's "Conspiracy Trial," pages 13-16.—J. W. W.)



## A REMARKABLE LECTURE.

John H. Surratt Tells  
His Story.

A Vivid Narrative—History of the Abduction Plot—Surratt's Experience with J. Wilkes Booth—Booth's Hints at the Murder of Lincoln—The Other Conspirators Threaten to Withdraw—The Assassination—Surratt's Escape to Canada—He Implicates Weichman in the Abduction Plot—He Denounces Weichman, Judge Fisher and Edwin M. Stanton—"John Harrison"—Surratt and the Confederate Government—Why Surratt Did Not Come to the Aid of His Mother.

"What! go twenty miles for an item?" Well you would have thought so if you had seen The Star reporter making the dust fly last night on the Rockville turnpike. And this is what called The Star reporter to Rockville last night—the following announcement in the Rockville paper:

### Lecture by John H. Surratt.

"On Tuesday evening, December 6, 1870, John H. Surratt, will deliver a lecture in the courthouse, in Rockville, on his 'Introduction to J. Wilkes Booth—The Plot for the Abduction of President Lincoln—Its Failure and Abandonment—His Trip to Richmond, and From Thence to Canada—Then by Orders to Elmira, and What Was Done There—His Hearing of the Assassination of President Lincoln—His Escape Back to Canada, and Concealment There—The Efforts of Detectives to Arrest Him and Means to Baffle Them—His Final Departure for Europe.' Doors open at 6:30 o'clock, and lecture commences at 7. Admittance, 50 cents. Children half price."

John H. Surratt, everybody knows who he is, and of his alleged connection with the conspiracy of 1865, his escape, capture and subsequent trial and discharge in this city over a year since. Since then he has spent a portion of his time in lower Maryland, been in the commission business in Baltimore, and now has turned up a school teacher in Rockville, where he has availed himself of leisure hours to prepare in shape of a lecture a history of the events which brought him so prominently before the public. The lecture took place in the courthouse, a quaint old building, but roomy and comfortable. The village looked deserted of everything save horses and empty vehicles of all kinds, from a sulky to a cord-wood wagon, the occupants of which had passed into the courtroom, the scene of the lecture. A curious spectacle was presented within. The bar was occupied by the ladies in large numbers, while without and high up around the walls, on criss's bench, etc., men and boys held every available spot. At 7 o'clock Surratt entered and passed up the side platform in unceremonious style to the judge's bench. He was unattended, wore a mixed gray suit, and, with the exception of having grown much stouter, looked the same as during his trial here. He has rather a mild and pleasant face, and decidedly intellectual head, and does not look like the sort of stuff for a performer of desperate deeds.

On his entrance the Rockville corner band in attendance struck up a lively air. Surratt then threw off his overcoat, revealing a manuscript book, which he drew from under his arms and laid open on the desk before him. He referred to it but little, however, having his lecture well in his memory. Without any introduction he was off, speaking very rapidly, but distinctly, for an hour and a quarter. He has a good voice and easy delivery, to which he occasionally added great warmth of feeling, particularly when he referred to his mother, and his alleged desertion of her in her darkest hour.

## The Lecture.

HE spoke as follows:  
Ladies and Gentlemen: Upon entering that door a few moments ago the impression on my mind was so strong as to vividly recall scenes of three years ago. I am not unacquainted with courtroom audiences. (Sensation.) I have stood before them before; true, not in the character of a lecturer, but as a prisoner at the bar, arraigned for the high crime of murder.

In contrasting the two positions I must confess I feel more easy as the prisoner at the bar than I do as a lecturer. Then I felt confident of success; now I do not. Then I had gentlemen of known ability to do all my talking for me, now, unfortunately, I have to do it for myself, and I feel ill capable of performing the task; still I hope you will all judge me kindly. I am not here to surprise you by an oratorical effort—not at all—but only to tell a simple tale. I feel that some explanation, perhaps, indeed, an apology, is due you for my appearance here this evening. In presenting this lecture before the public I do it in no spirit of self-justification. In the trial of sixty-one days I made my defense to the world, and have no need or desire to rehearse it; nor do I appear for self-glorification. On the contrary, I dislike notoriety, and leave my solitude and obscurity unwillingly. Neither is it an itching for notoriety or fame. I stand here through the force of that which has obliged many other men to do things quite as distasteful—pecuniary necessity, for the supply of which no more available channel presented itself. This is a reason easily appreciated. So you will take it kindly, I trust, as the ground we have to go over together will guarantee sufficient interest to repay your kind attention. In this my first lecture I will speak of my introduction to J. Wilkes Booth, his plan—its failure—our final separation—my trip from Richmond and thence to Canada—then by orders to Elmira—what was done there—the first intimation I had of Mr. Lincoln's death, my return to Canada and my concealment there, and final departure for Europe. At the breaking out of the war I was a student at St. Charles College in Maryland, but did not remain long there after that important event. I left in July, 1861, and returning home commenced to take an active part in the stirring events of that period. I was not more than eighteen years of age, and was mostly engaged in sending information regarding the movements of the United States troops stationed in Washington and elsewhere, and carrying dispatches to Confederate boats on the Potomac.

### Evaded the Detectives.

We had a regular established line from Washington to the Potomac, and, being the only unmarried man on the route, I had most of the hard riding to do. (Laughter.) I devised various ways to carry the dispatches—sometimes in the heel of my boots, sometimes between the planks of the buggy. I confess that never in my life did I come across a more stupid set of detectives than those generally employed by the United States government. They seemed to have no idea whatever how to search me. In 1861 my family left Maryland and moved to Washington where I took a still more active part in the stirring events of that period. It was a fascinating life to me. It seemed as if I could not do too much or run too great a risk.

In the fall of 1861 I was introduced to John Wilkes Booth, who, I was given to understand, wished to know something about the main avenue leading from Washington to the Potomac. We met several times, but as he seemed to be very reticent with regard to his purposes and very anxious to get all the information out of me he could, I refused to tell him anything at all.

At last I said to him: "It is useless for you, Mr. Booth, to seek any information from me at all; I know who you are and what are your intentions."

He hesitated some time, but finally said he would make known his views to me provided I would promise secrecy.

I replied: "I will do nothing of the kind. You know well I am a southern man. If you cannot trust me we will separate."

He then said: "I will confide my plans to you, but before doing so I will make known to you the motives that actuate me. In the northern prisons are many thousands of our men whom the United

States government refuses to exchange. You know as well as I the efforts that have been made to bring about the desired exchange. Aside from great suffering they are compelled to undergo, we are sadly in want of them as soldiers. We cannot spare one man, whereas the United States government is willing to let its own soldiers remain in our prisons because she has no need of them. I have a proposition to submit to you, which I think if we can carry out would bring about the desired exchange."

### Closeted in Secret.

There was a long and ominous silence which I at last was compelled to break by asking, "Well, sir, what is your proposition?"

He sat quiet for an instant, and then, before answering me, arose and looked under the bed, into the wardrobe, in the doorway and the passageway, and then said, "We will have to be careful, walls have ears."

He then drew his chair close to me and in a whisper said, "It is to kidnap President Lincoln and carry him off to Richmond."

"Kidnap President Lincoln!" I said. I confess that I stood aghast at the proposition, and looked upon it as a foolhardy undertaking. To think of successfully seizing Mr. Lincoln in the capital of the United States, surrounded by thousands of his soldiers, and carrying him off to Richmond looked to me like a foolish idea. I told him as much. He went on to tell with what facility he could be seized, in and about Washington, as, for example, in his various rides to and from the Soldiers' Home, his summer residence. He entered into minute details of the proposed capture, and of the various parts to be performed by the actors in the performance. I was amazed—thunderstruck—and, in fact, I might also say, frightened at the unparalleled audacity of his scheme.

After two days' reflection I told him I was willing to try it. I believed it practical at that time, though now regard it as a foolhardy undertaking. I hope you will not blame me for going thus far. I honestly thought an exchange of prisoners could be brought about could we have once obtained possession of Mr. Lincoln's person, I now reverse the case. Where is there a young man in the north with one spark of patriotism in his heart who would not have with enthusiastic ardor joined in any undertaking for the capture of Jefferson Davis and brought him to Washington? There is not one who would not have done so.

### Assassination Not Planned.

So I was led on by a desire to assist the south in gaining her independence. I had no hesitation in taking part in anything honorable that might tend toward the accomplishment of that object. (Tremendous applause.) Such a thing as the assassination of Mr. Lincoln I never heard spoken by any of the parties—never. (Sensation.) Upon one occasion, I remember, we had called a meeting in Washington for the purpose of discussing matters in general, as we had understood that the government had received information that there was a plot of some kind on hand. They had even commenced to build a stockade on the Navy Yard bridge, gates opening toward the south as though they expected danger from within, and not from without. At this meeting I explained the construction of the gates, etc., and that the best thing we could do would be to throw up the whole project. Every one seemed to coincide with my opinion except Booth, who sat silent and abstracted.

Arising at last and bringing down his fist upon the table, he said: "Well, gentlemen, if the worst comes to the worst, I shall know what to do."

Some hard words, and even threats, then passed between him and some of the party. Four of us then arose, one saying: "If I understand you to intimate anything more than the capture of Mr. Lincoln, I for one, will bid you good-bye." Every one expressed the same opinion. We all arose and commenced putting our hats on. Booth perceiving probably that he had gone too far, asked pardon, saying that he "had drunk too much champagne." After some difficulty everything was amicably arranged, and we separated at 5 o'clock in the morning. Days, weeks and months passed by without an opportunity presenting itself for us to attempt the capture. We seldom saw one another owing to the many rumors about that a conspiracy of some kind was being concocted in Washington.

1874



We had arranged to be perfectly from Washington for the purpose. Boats were in readiness to carry us across the river. One day we received information that the President would visit the Seventh Street Hospital for the purpose of being present at an entertainment to be given for the benefit of the wounded soldiers. The report only reached us about three-quarters of an hour before the time appointed, but so perfect was our communication that he were instantly in our saddles on the way to the hospital. This was between 1 and 2 o'clock in the afternoon.

#### A Sudden Attack.

It was our intention to seize the carriage, which was drawn by a splendid pair of horses, and to have one of our men mount the box and drive direct for southern Maryland via Benning bridge. We felt confident that all the cavalry in the city could never overhail us. We were all mounted on swift horses, besides having a thorough knowledge of the country, it being determined to abandon the carriage after passing the city limits. Upon the suddenness of the blow and the celerity of our movements we depended for success. By the time the alarm could have been given and horses saddled, we would have been on our way through southern Maryland toward the Potomac river. To our great disappointment, however, the President was not there, but one of the government officials—Mr. Chase, if I mistake not. We did not disturb him, as we wanted a bigger chase (laughter) than he could have afforded us. It was certainly a bitter disappointment, but yet, I think, a most fortunate one for us. It was our last attempt.

We soon after this became convinced that we could not remain much longer undiscovered and that we must abandon our enterprise. Accordingly a separation finally took place, and I never after saw any of the party except one, and that was when I was on my way from Richmond to Canada on business of quite a different nature—about which, presently. Such is the story of our abduction plot.

Rash, perhaps foolish, but honorable, I maintain in its means and ends; actuated by such motives as would under similar circumstances be a sufficient inducement to thousands of southern young men to have embarked in a similar enterprise.

Shortly after our abandonment of the abduction scheme some dispatches came to me which I was compelled to see through to Richmond. They were foreign ones, and had no reference whatever to this affair. I accordingly left home for Richmond, and arrived there safely the Friday evening before the evacuation of that city. On my arrival I went to Spotswood Hotel, where I was told that Mr. Benjamin, the then secretary of war of the Confederate states, wanted to see me. I accordingly sought his presence. He asked me if I would carry some dispatches to Canada for him. I replied "Yes." That evening he gave me the dispatches and \$200 in gold with which to pay my way to Canada. That was the only money I ever received from the Confederate government or any of its agents. It may be well to remark here that this scheme of abduction was concocted without the knowledge or the assistance of the Confederate government in any shape or form.

#### Confederate Government Ignorant.

Booth and I often consulted together as to whether it would not be well to acquaint the authorities in Richmond with our plan, as we were sadly in want of money, our expenses being very heavy. In fact, the question arose among us as to whether, after getting Mr. Lincoln, if we succeeded in our plan, the Confederate authorities would not surrender us to the United States again, because of doing this thing without their knowledge or consent. But we never acquainted them with the plan, and they never had anything in the wide world to do with it. In fact, we were jealous of our undertaking, and wanted no outside help. I have not made this statement to defend the officers of the Confederate government. They are perfectly able to defend themselves. What I have done myself am not ashamed to let the world know.

I left Richmond Saturday morning before the evacuation of that place, and reached Washington the following Monday at 4 o'clock p.m. April 3, 1865. As soon as I reached the Maryland shore I understood that the detectives knew of my trip south, and were on the lookout for me.

I had been south several times before for the secret service, but had never been caught. At that time I was carrying the dispatches Mr. Benjamin gave; in a book entitled "The Life of John Brown." During my trip and while reading that book I learned to my utter amazement that John Brown was a martyr sitting at the right hand of God. (Precarious laughter.) I succeeded in reaching Washington safely, and, in passing up 7th street, met one of our party, who inquired what had become of Booth. I told him where I had been; that I was then on my way to Canada, and that I had not seen or heard anything of Booth since our separation. In view of the fact that Richmond had fallen, and that all hopes of the abduction of the President had been given up, I advised him to go home and go to work. That was the last time I saw any of the party. I went to a hotel and stopped over that night, as a detective had been to my house inquiring of the servant my whereabouts.

In the early train next morning, Tuesday, April 4, 1865, I left for New York, and that was the last time I ever saw Washington until brought there by the United States government a captive in irons, all reports to the contrary notwithstanding.

#### On to Canada.

The United States, as you will remember, tried to prove my presence in Washington on the 15th of April, the day on which Mr. Lincoln met his death. Upon arriving in New York I called at Booth's house and was told by the servant that he had left that morning suddenly, on the ground of going to Boston to fulfill an engagement at the theater. In the evening of the same day I took the cars for Montreal, arriving there the next day. I put up at the St. Lawrence Hotel, registering myself as "John Harrison," such being my two first names.

Shortly afterward I saw Gen. Edward G. Lee, to whom the dispatches were directed, and delivered them to him. Those dispatches we tried to introduce as evidence in my trial, but his honor Judge Fisher ruled them out, despite the fact that the government had tried to prove that they had relation to the conspiracy to kill Mr. Lincoln. They were only accounts of some money transactions—nothing more or less. A week or so after my arrival there Gen. Lee came to my room and told me he had a plan on foot to release the Confederate prisoners then in Elmira, N. Y.

He said he had sent many parties there, but they always got frightened, and only half executed their orders. He asked me if I would go there and take a sketch of the prison, find out the number of prisoners, also minor details in regard to the number of soldiers on guard, cannon, small arms, etc. I readily accepted these new labors, owing to the fact that I could not return to Washington for fear of the detectives. The news of the evacuation of Richmond did not seem to disturb the general much in his plan, as he doubtless thought then that the Confederacy wanted men more than ever, no one dreaming that it was virtually at an end. I was much amused at one expression

made use of by an ex-reb with regard to the suddenness of its demise: "D—n the thing, it didn't even flicker, but went right out." (Laughter and applause.)

In accordance with Gen. Lee's order I went to Elmira, arriving there Wednesday, two days before Mr. Lincoln's death, and registered at the Brainerd House, as usual, as "John Harrison." The following day I went to work and made a complete sketch of the prison and surroundings. About 10 o'clock Friday night I retired, little thinking that on that night a blow would be struck which would forever blast my hopes and make me a wanderer in a foreign land.

#### News of the Assassination.

I left the night through and came the next morning little dreaming of arm then brewing around my head.

When I took my seat at the table about 9 o'clock a.m. a gentleman to my left remarked:

"Have you heard the news?"

"No, I've not," I replied. "What is it?"

"Why, President Lincoln and Secretary Seward have been assassinated."

I really put so little faith in what the man said that I made a remark that it was too early in the morning to get off such jokes as that.

"It's so," he said, at the same time drawing out a paper and showing it to me.

Sure enough there I saw an account of what he told me, but as no names were mentioned, it never occurred to me for an instant that it could have been Booth or any of the party, for the simple reason that I had never heard anything regarding assassination spoken of during my intercourse with them. I had good reason to believe that there was another conspiracy afloat in Washington. In fact, we all knew it.

One evening as I was partially lying down in the reading room of the Metropolitan Hotel two or three gentlemen came in and looked around as if to make sure that no one was around. They then commenced to talk about what had been done, the best means for the expedition, etc. It being about dusk, and no gas-light, and I being partially concealed behind a writing desk, I was an unwilling listener of what occurred. I told Booth of this afterward, and he said he had heard something to the same effect. It only made us all the more eager to carry out our plans at an early day, for fear some one should get ahead of us. We didn't know what they were after exactly, but we were well satisfied that their object was very much the same as ours. Arising from the table I thought over who the party could be, for at that time no names had been telegraphed. I was pretty sure it was none of the old party.

I approached the telegraph office in the main hall of the hotel for the purpose of ascertaining if J. Wilkes Booth was in New York. I picked up a blank and wrote "John Wilkes Booth," giving the number of the house. I hesitated a moment, and then tore the paper up, and then wrote one "J. W. B.," with directions, which I was led to do from the fact that during our whole connection we rarely wrote or telegraphed under our proper names, but always in such a manner that no one could understand but ourselves. One way of Booth's was to send letters to me under cover to my quondam friend, Louis J. Welchman.

#### Welchman in the Plot.

Doubtless you all know who Louis J. Welchman is. They were sent to him because he knew of the plot to abduct President Lincoln. I proclaim it here and before the world that Louis J. Welchman was a party to the plan to abduct President Lincoln. He had been told all about it, and was constantly importuning me to let him become an active member. I refused, for the simple reason that I told him he could neither ride a horse nor shoot a pistol, which was a fact. (Laughter.) These were two necessary accomplishments for us.

My refusal nettled him some. So he went off, as it afterward appeared by his testimony, and told some government clerk that he had a vague idea that there was a plan of some kind on hand to abduct President Lincoln. This he says himself; that he could have spotted every man of the party. Why didn't he do it? Booth sometimes was rather suspicious of him, and asked if I thought he could be trusted.



I said: "Certainly he can. Weichman is a southern man." And I always believed it until I had good reason to believe otherwise, because he had furnished information for the Confederate government, besides allowing me access to the government's records after office hours. I have very little to say of Louis J. Weichman. But I do pronounce him a base-born perjurer; a murderer of the meanest hue! Give me a man who can strike his victim dead, but save me from a man who, through perjury, will cause the death of an innocent person.

Double murderer! Hell possesses no worse fiend than a character of that kind. (Applause.) Away with such a character. I leave him in the pit of infamy which he has dug for himself, a prey to the lights of his guilty conscience. (Applause.)

I telegraphed Booth thus:

"J. W. B. In New York:

"If you are in New York telegraph me."  
—JOHN HARRISON, Elmira, N. Y."

The operator, after looking over it, said: "Is it J. W. B.?" To which I replied "Yes." He evidently wanted the whole name, and had scarcely finished telegraphing when a door right near the office and opening on the street was pushed open, and I heard some one say: "Yes, there are three or four brothers of him—John, Junius Brutus, Edwin and J. Wilkes Booth." The whole truth flashed on me in an instant, and I said to myself, "My God! What have I done?"

### Town in an Uproar.

The dispatch was still lying before me, and I reached over and took it up for the purpose of destroying it, but the operator stretched forth his hand and said: "We must file all telegrams." My first impulse was to tear it up, but I pitched it back and walked off. The town was in the greatest uproar—flags at half-mast, bells tolling, etc., etc. Still I did not think that I was in danger, and determined to go immediately to Baltimore to find out the particulars of the tragedy.

But here I wish to say a few words concerning the register of the Brainerd House. When my counsel, by my own direction, went to seek that register it could not be found. Our inability to produce it on the trial naturally cast a suspicion over our alibi. For weeks, months did we seek to find its whereabouts, but to no purpose. Every man who was connected with the hotel was hunted up and questioned. Every register of the hotel before and after the one which ought to contain my name was to be found, but the most important one of all was gone. Now, the question is, What became of that register?

The United States government, by one of its witnesses, Dr. McMillan, knew in November, 1865, that I was in Elmira at the time of the assassination. They knew it, and they naturally traced me there to find out what I was doing. That some of the government emissaries abstracted that register I firmly believe, or perhaps it is stored away in some of the other government vaults, under charge of some judge high in position. But this is only a surmise of mine. But the circumstance involves a mystery of villainy which the all-seeing God will yet bring to light. The dispatch I sent to Booth also from Elmira it was impossible to find.

We had the operator at Washington during my trial, but he said the original was gone, though he had a copy of it. In telegraph offices they are compelled to keep all dispatches filed. Of course, we could not offer this copy in evidence because the original alone would be accepted, and that had been made away with. So sure was the government that it had destroyed all evidence of my sojourn in Elmira that in getting me in Washington in time for Mr. Lincoln's death it brought me by way of New York city. But so completely was it folly in this that in its rebutting testimony it saw the absolute necessity of having me go by way of Elmira, and it changed its tactics accordingly. That was enough to damn my case in any man's mind.

### Government Persistent.

This is a strange fact, but nevertheless true, that the government, having in its possession this hotel register as well as my dispatch to Booth, and knowing, moreover, by one of its witnesses that I was in Elmira, yet tried to prove that I was in Washington the night of Mr. Lincoln's death, giving orders and commanding in general, as it was pleased to say. The gentlemen in Elmira by whom I proved my alibi were men of the highest standing and integrity, whose testimony the United States government could not and dare not impeach.

### Attempt to Impeach.

I left Elmira with the intention of going to Baltimore. I really did not comprehend at that time the danger I was in. As there was no train going south that evening, I concluded to go to Canandaigua, and from there to Baltimore by way of Elmira and New York. Upon arriving at Canandaigua Saturday evening I learned to my utter disappointment that no train left until the Monday following, so I took a room at the Webster House, registering myself as "John Harrison."

"The next day I went to church, I remember it being Easter Sunday. I can here safely say that the United States government had not the remotest idea that I stopped anywhere after I left Elmira. They thought when I left there I went straight through to Canada. It was a very fortunate thing for me that I could not leave Canandaigua. Now mark, ladies and gentlemen, if you please, my name was signed midway of the hotel register, with six other parties before and after. There was no doubt as to the genuineness of signature, because the very experts brought by the United States to swear to my signature in other instances swore also that that was my handwriting. After all this the register was ruled out by Judge Fisher, because he was well aware if he admitted it my case was at an end. I could not be in two places at once, though they tried to make me so. Listen to his reason for so ruling:

"The prisoner might have stepped down in Canada to Canandaigua during his concealment and signed his name there for the purpose of protecting himself in future."

It was a likely idea that the proprietor of the hotel would leave a blank line in a register for my especial benefit. Need I say that the ruling was a most infamous and ought to damn the judge who so I as a villain in the minds of every just and upright man. (Loud and prolonged applause.)

### Judge Against Him.

"Had Judge Fisher been one of the lawyers for the prosecution he could not have worked harder against me than he did. But, thanks to him, he did me more good than harm. His unprincipled and vindictive character was too apparent to every one in the courtroom. I could not help smiling at the time to think of the great shrewdness and foresight he accorded me by that decision. At times, really, during my trial, I could scarcely recognize any vestige of my former self. Sometimes I would ask myself, 'Am I the same individual? Am I really the same John H. Surratt?'"

"When that register was produced in court the Hon. Judge Pierpont, the leading counsel for the United States, became exceedingly nervous, especially when Mr. Bradley refused to show it to him, and he tore up several pieces of paper in his trembling fingers. He evidently saw what a pitiful case he had, and how he had been made the dupe of his precious, worthy friend, Edwin M. Stanton. At the time of my trial the

proprietor of the Webster House in Canandaigua could not find the cash book of the hotel, in which there should have been an entry in favor of 'John Harrison' for so much cash. When he returned to Canandaigua, my trial being then ended, he wrote Mr. Bradley and sent it to him. It was then too late. My trial was over. If we had had that cash book at the time of my trial it would have proved beyond a doubt that I was in Canandaigua and not in Washington city.

"On Monday, when I was leaving Canandaigua, I bought some New York papers. In looking over them, my eye lit on the following paragraph, which I never forgot, and don't think I ever will. It runs thus:

"The assassin of Secretary Seward is said to be John H. Surratt, a notorious secessionist of southern Maryland. His name, with that of John Wilkes Booth, will forever lead the infamous role of assassins."

"I could scarcely believe my senses. I

gazed upon my name, which seemed sometimes to gaze at me as I passed mountains and then to dwindle away to nothing. So much for my former connection with him, I thought. After fully realizing the state of the case, I concluded to change my course and go direct to Canada.

"I left Canandaigua Monday, 12 m., going to Albany, arriving there Tuesday morning in time for breakfast. When I stepped on the platform at the depot at St. Albans I noticed that one of the detectives scanned every one head and foot, myself as well as the rest. Before leaving Montreal for Elmira I provided myself with an Oxford-cut jacket and round-top hat peculiar to Canada at that time. I knew my trip to Elmira would be a dangerous one, and I wished to pass myself off as a Canadian, and I succeeded in doing so, as was proved by my witnesses in Elmira. I believed that costume guarded me safely through St. Albans.

"I went in with others and moved around, with the detectives standing there most of the time looking at us. Of course I was obliged to talk as loud as anybody about the tragedy. After having a hearty meal I lighted a cigar and walked up town. One of the detectives approached me, stared me directly in the face, and I looked him quietly back. In a few moments I was speeding on my way to Montreal, where I arrived at 2 o'clock in the afternoon, going again to the St. Lawrence Hotel. Soon after I called on a friend, to whom I explained my former connections with Booth, and told him I was afraid the United States government would suspect me of complicity in the part of the assassination. He advised me to make myself scarce.

"I immediately went to the hotel, got my things and repaired to the room of a friend. When my friend's tea-time came I would not go to the table with him, but remained in the room. The ladies wanted to know why he did not bring his friend to tea with him. He replied that I did not want any. One of the ladies replied: 'I expect you have got Booth in there.' (Laughter.)

"Perhaps so," he answered laughingly. "That was rather close guessing. (Laughter.) At nightfall I went to the house of one who afterward proved to be a most devoted friend. There I remained until the evening of the next day, when I was driven out in a carriage with two gentlemen, strangers to me. One day I walked out and saw Weichman on the lookout for me.

### To Divide the Reward.

"He had little idea that I was so near. One night about 11 o'clock my friend, in whose house I was, came to me and said, in a smiling way:

"The detectives have offered me \$20,000 if I will tell them where you are."

"Very well," said I. "Give me one-half and let them know."

"They suspected this gentleman of protecting me and they had really made him the offer. One day about 12 o'clock I was told that they were going to search the house and that I must leave immediately, which I did. They searched it before morning. This gentleman was a poor man, with a large family, and yet money could not buy him. (Applause.) I remained with this gentleman until I left Montreal, within a week or so afterward.

"The detectives were now hunting me





very closely and would have doubtless succeeded in capturing me had it not been for a blunder on the part of my friend Welchman. He had, it appears, started the detectives on the wrong track by telling them that I had left the house of Mr. Porterfield in company with some others and was going north to Montreal. Soon that section was swarming with detectives. I was not with the party, but about the same time I, too, left Montreal in a hack, going some eight or nine miles down the St. Lawrence river, crossing that stream in a small canoe. I was attired as a huntsman. At 3 o'clock Wednesday morning we arrived at our destination, a small town lying south of Montreal. We entered the village quietly, hoping that no one would see us.

"It has been asserted over and over again for the purpose of damning me in the estimation of every honest man that I deserted her who gave me birth in the darkest hour of her need. Truly would I have merited the execration of every man had such been the case. But such was not the case. When I left Montreal there was no cause for uneasiness on my part, and upon my arrival in the country I wrote to my friends to keep me posted in regard to the approaching trial and to send me the papers regularly. I received letters from them frequently, in all of which they assured me there was no cause of anxiety; that it was only a matter of time, and it would all be well. After while papers did not come so regularly, and those that did come spoke very encouragingly.

"The little while afterward when they came sentences were mutilated with ink and pen.

#### Messenger to Washington.

I protested against such action, and for some time I received no papers at all. I became very uneasy and wrote for publication an article signed by myself, which I sent to Montreal to be forwarded for publication in the New York World. It is needless to say it never went. Things continued in this way for some time, until I could stand the suspense no longer. I determined to send a messenger to Washington for that purpose, and secured the services of an intelligent educated gentleman. I started him off immediately, I paying all the expenses. I gave him a letter to a friend of mine in Washington, with instructions to say to him to put himself in communication with the

counsel for defense, and to make a correct report to me as to how the case stood; if there was any danger; and also to communicate with me if my presence was necessary, and inform me without delay, with an urgent request that he would see and inquire for himself how matters stood.

He left me, and God alone knows the suspense and anxiety of my mind during the days of his absence. I imagined and thought all kinds of things, yet I was powerless to act. At last he returned, and so bright and cheerful was his countenance that I confess one-half of my fears were dispelled. He represented "Everything as progressing well," and brought me this message from the gentleman in Washington to whom I had sent him:

"Be under no apprehension as to any serious consequences. Remain perfectly quiet, as any action on your part would only tend to make matters worse. If you can be of any service to us, we will let you know, but keep quiet."

These were the instructions I received from my friend in Washington, in which I felt the utmost reliance, and who I thought would never deceive me. He also sent me copies of the National Intelligencer, containing evidence for the defense. I certainly felt greatly relieved, though not entirely satisfied. This news reached me some time in the latter part of June, just before the party of gentlemen of whom I have spoken had arrived. They, too, assured me there was no cause for fear. What else could I do but accept these unwavering assurances. Even had I thought otherwise, I could not have taken action resulting in good.

Just on the eve of my departure to join a party of gentlemen on a hunting excursion, while I was waiting at the hotel for the train, the proprietor handed me a paper and said:

"Read that about the conspirators."

Little did the man know who I was or how closely that paragraph wore upon me or mine.

#### Betrayed by a Friend.

That paper informed me that on a day which was then present, and at an hour which then had come and gone, the most hellish of deeds was to be enacted. It had been determined upon and carried out, even before I had inclination that there was any danger. It would be foolhardy

for me to attempt to describe my feelings. After gazing at the paper for some time I dropped it on the floor, turning on my heel and going directly to the house where I had been stopping before. When I entered the room I found my friend sitting there.

As soon as he saw me he turned deadly pale, but never uttered a word. I said: "You doubtless thought you were acting a friend—the part of a friend—toward me, but you have deceived me. I forgive you, but I can never forget it."

"We all thought it for the best, Charley," he commenced to say, but I did not stay to hear more. I went to my room, remained there until dark, and then signified my intention to leave the place immediately. I felt reckless as to what should become of me.

After visiting Quebec and other places, with a reward of \$25,000 hanging over my head, I did not think it safe to remain there, and so I concluded to seek an asylum in foreign lands. I had nothing now to bind me to this country, save an only sister, and I knew she would never want for kind friends or a good home. For myself, it mattered little where I went, so I could roam once more a free man. I then went on a venture and now, ladies and gentlemen, I go forth again on a venture. Gladly would I have remained hidden among the multitude, but the stern necessities arising from the blasting of my earthly prospects forced me to leave my solitude and to stand again before the public gaze as the historian of my own life. One mitigation to this distasteful mess in this, my first attempt, however, is the kindness with which I have been received, and the patience with which I have been listened to, for which I return you, ladies and gentlemen, my sincere and heartfelt thanks.

The lecture concluded, the band played "Dixie" and a concert was improvised, the audience not separating until a late hour, during which time Surratt was quite a lion among the ladies present.

very closely and would have doubtless succeeded in capturing me had it not been for a blunder on the part of my friend Welchman. He had, it appears, started the detectives on the wrong track by telling them that I had left the house of Mr. Porterfield in company with some others and was going north to Montreal. Soon that section was swarming with detectives. I was not with the party, but about the same time I, too, left Montreal in a hack, going some eight or nine miles down the St. Lawrence river, crossing that stream in a small canoe. I was attired as a huntsman. At 3 o'clock Wednesday morning we arrived at our destination, a small town lying south of Montreal. We entered the village quietly, hoping that no one would see us.

"It has been asserted over and over again for the purpose of damning me in the estimation of every honest man that I deserted her who gave me birth in the darkest hour of her need. Truly would I have merited the execration of every man had such been the case. But such was not the case. When I left Montreal there was no cause for uneasiness on my part, and upon my arrival in the country I wrote to my friends to keep me posted in regard to the approaching trial and to send me the papers regularly. I received letters from them frequently, in all of which they assured me there was no cause of anxiety; that it was only a matter of time, and it would all be well. After while papers did not come so regularly, and those that did come spoke very encouragingly.

"The little while afterward when they came sentences were mutilated with ink and pen.

#### Messenger to Washington.

I protested against such action, and for some time I received no papers at all. I became very uneasy and wrote for publication an article signed by myself, which I sent to Montreal to be forwarded for publication in the New York World. It is needless to say it never went. Things continued in this way for some time, until I could stand the suspense no longer. I determined to send a messenger to Washington for that purpose, and secured the services of an intelligent educated gentleman. I started him off immediately, I paying all the expenses. I gave him a letter to a friend of mine in Washington, with instructions to say to him to put himself in communication with the

counsel for defense, and to make a correct report to me as to how the case stood; if there was any danger; and also to communicate with me if my presence was necessary, and inform me without delay, with an urgent request that he would see and inquire for himself how matters stood.

He left me, and God alone knows the suspense and anxiety of my mind during the days of his absence. I imagined and thought all kinds of things, yet I was powerless to act. At last he returned, and so bright and cheerful was his countenance that I confess one-half of my fears were dispelled. He represented "Everything as progressing well," and brought me this message from the gentleman in Washington to whom I had sent him:

"Be under no apprehension as to any serious consequences. Remain perfectly quiet, as any action on your part would only tend to make matters worse. If you can be of any service to us, we will let you know, but keep quiet."

These were the instructions I from my friend in Washington, in I felt the utmost reliance, and who thought would never deceive me. He also sent me copies of the National Intelligencer, containing evidence for the defense. I certainly felt greatly relieved, though not entirely satisfied. This news reached me some time in the latter part of June, just before the party of gentlemen of whom I have spoken had arrived. They, too, assured me there was no cause for fear. What else could I do but accept these unwavering assurances. Even had I thought otherwise, I could not have taken action resulting in good.

Just on the eve of my departure to join a party of gentlemen on a hunting excursion, while I was waiting at the hotel for the train, the proprietor handed me a paper and said:

"Read that about the conspirators."

Little did the man know who I was or how closely that paragraph wore upon me or mine.

#### Betrayed by a Friend.

That paper informed me that on a day which was then present, and at an hour which then had come and gone, the most hellish of deeds was to be enacted. It had been determined upon and carried out, even before I had inclination that there was any danger. It would be foolhardy

for me to attempt to describe my feelings. After gazing at the paper for some time I dropped it on the floor, turning on my heel and going directly to the house where I had been stopping before. When I entered the room I found my friend sitting there.

As soon as he saw me he turned deadly pale, but never uttered a word. I said: "You doubtless thought you were acting a friend—the part of a friend—toward me, but you have deceived me. I forgive you, but I can never forget it."

"We all thought it for the best, Charley," he commenced to say, but I did not stay to hear more. I went to my room, remained there until dark, and then signified my intention to leave the place immediately. I felt reckless as to what should become of me.

After visiting Quebec and other places, with a reward of \$25,000 hanging over my head, I did not think it safe to remain there, and so I concluded to seek an asylum in foreign lands. I had nothing now to bind me to this country, save an only sister, and I knew she would never want for kind friends or a good home. For myself, it mattered little where I went, so I could roam once more a free man. I then went on a venture and now, ladies and gentlemen, I go forth again on a venture. Gladly would I have remained hidden among the multitude, but the stern necessities arising from the blasting of my earthly prospects forced me to leave my solitude and to stand again before the public gaze as the historian of my own life. One mitigation to this distasteful mess in this, my first attempt, however, is the kindness with which I have been received, and the patience with which I have been listened to, for which I return you, ladies and gentlemen, my sincere and heartfelt thanks.

The lecture concluded, the band played "Dixie" and a concert was improvised, the audience not separating until a late hour, during which time Surratt was quite a lion among the ladies present.



Ladies and Gentlemen: Upon entering that door a few moments ago the impression on my mind was so strong as to vividly recall scenes of three years ago. I am not unacquainted with court-room audiences. I have stood before them before; true, not in the character of a lecturer, but as a prisoner at the bar, arraigned for the high crime of murder. In contrasting the two positions I must confess I felt more easy as the prisoner at the bar than I do as a lecturer. Then I felt confident of success; now I do not. Then I had gentlemen of known ability to do all my talking for me; now, unfortunately I have to do it for myself and I feel illy capable of performing the task; still I hope you will all judge me kindly. I am not here to surprise you by an oratorical effort--not at all--but only to tell a simple tale. I feel that some explanation--perhaps, indeed, an apology--is due you for my appearance here this evening. In presenting this lecture before the public I do it in no spirit of self-justification. In the trial of sixty-one days I made my defence to the world, and have no need or desire to rehearse it; nor do I appear for self-glorification. On the contrary, I dislike notoriety, and leave my solitude and obscurity unwillingly. Neither is it an itching for fame. I stand here through the force of that which has obliged many other men to do things quite as distasteful: pecuniary necessity, for the supply of which no more available channel presented itself. This is a reason easily appreciated. So you will take it kindly, I trust, as the ground we have to go over together will guarantee sufficient interest to repay your kind attention.

In this, my first lecture, I will speak of my introduction to J. Wilkes<sup>K</sup> Booth; his plan, its failure, our final separation; my trip from Richmond and thence to Canada, intimation I had of Mr. Lincoln's death; my return to Canada and my concealment there; and my final departure for Europe.

At the breaking out of the war I was a student at St. Charles College in Maryland, but did not remain long there after the important event. I left in July, 1861, and returning home, commenced to take an active part

in the stirring events of that period. I was not more than eighteen years of age, and was mostly engaged in sending information regarding the movements of the United States soldiers stationed in Washington and elsewhere, and carrying dispatches to Confederate boats on the Potomac. We had a regular established line from Washington to the Potomac, and being the only unmarried man on the route, I had most of the hard riding to do. I devised various ways to carry the dispatches--sometimes in the heel of my boots, sometimes between the planks of the buggy. I confess that never in my life did I come across a more stupid set of detectives than those generally employed by the United States Government. They seemed to have no idea whatever how to search me.

In 1864 my family left Maryland and moved to Washington, where I took a still more active part in the stirring events of that period. It was a fascinating life to me. It seemed as if I could not do too much or run too great a risk.

In the fall of 1864 I was introduced to John Wilkes Booth, who, I was given to understand, wished to know something about the main avenue leading from Washington to the Potomac. We met several times, but as he seemed to be very reticent with regard to his purposes, and very anxious to get all the information out of me he could, I refused to tell him anything at all. At last I said to him: "It is useless for you, Mr. Booth, to seek any information from me at all; I know who you are and what are your intentions." He hesitated some time, but finally said he would make known his views to me provided I would promise secrecy. I replied: "I will do nothing of the kind; you know well I am a Southern man. If you cannot trust me, we will separate." He then said: "I will confide my plans to you; but before doing so I will make known to you the motives that actuate me. In the Northern prisons are many thousands of our men whom the United States Government refuses to exchange. You know as well as I the efforts that have been made to bring about the desired ~~WICKHAM~~ exchange. ~~You know as well as~~



Aside from the great suffering they are compelled to undergo, we are sadly in want of them as soldiers. We cannot spare one man, whereas the United States Government ~~refuses~~ is willing to let their own soldiers remain in our prisons because she has no need of them. I have a proposition to submit to you which I think, if we can carry out, would bring about the desired ~~change~~ exchange."

There was a long and ominous silence which I at last was compelled to break by asking: "Well, sir, what is your proposition?" He sat quiet for an instant and then, before answering me, arose and looked under the bed, into the wardrobe, in the doorway and the passage-way, and then said: "We will have to be careful; walls have ears." He then drew his chair close to me and in a whisper said, "It is to kidnap President Lincoln, and carry him off to Richmond."

"Kidnap President Lincoln!" I said. I confess that I stood aghast at the proposition, and looked upon it as a foolhardy undertaking. To think of successfully seizing Mr. Lincoln in the capital of the United States, surrounded by thousands of his soldiers, and carrying him off to Richmond, looked to me like a foolish idea. I told him as much. He went on to say tell with what facility he could be seized in and about Washington, as, for example, in his various rides to and from the Soldiers' Home, his summer residence. He entered into minute details of the proposed capture, and of the various parts to be performed by the actors in the performance. I was amazed--thunderstruck--and, in fact, I might also say, frightened at the unparalleled audacity of his scheme.

\*After two days' reflection I told him I was willing to try it. I believed it practical at that time, though now regard it as a foolhardy undertaking. I hope you will not blame me for going thus far. I honestly thought an exchange of prisoners could be brought about could we have once obtained possession of Mr. Lincoln's person. I now reverse the case: Where is there a young man in the North, with one spark of patriotism in his heart, who

would not have with enthusiastic ardour joined in any undertaking for the capture of Jefferson Davis, and brought him to Washington? There is not one who would not have done so! So I was led on by a desire to assist the South in gaining her independence. I had no hesitation in taking part in anything honourable that might tend toward the accomplishment of that object. Such a thing as the assassination of Mr. Lincoln I never heard spoken by any of the parties--never! Upon one occasion, I remember, we had called a meeting in Washington for the purpose of discussing matters in general, as we had understood that the Government had received information that there was a plot of some kind on hand. They had even commenced to build a stockade on the Navy Yard bridge, gates opening toward the south, as though they expected danger from within, and not from without. At this meeting I explained the construction of the gates, etc., and that the best thing we could do would be to throw up the whole project. Every one seemed to coincide with my opinion except Booth, who sat silent and abstracted. Arising at last, and bringing down his fist upon the table, he said: "Well, gentlemen, if the worst comes to the worst, I shall know what to do!"

Some hard words and even threats then passed between him and ~~some~~ of the party. Four of us then arose, one saying: "If I understand you to intimate anything more than the capture of Mr. Lincoln, I, for one, will bid you good-bye." Every one expressed the same opinion. We all arose and commenced putting our hats on. Booth, perceiving probably that he had gone too far, asked pardon, saying that he "had drank too much champagne." After some difficulty everything was amicably arranged, and we separated at five o'clock in the morning.

Days, weeks, and months passed by without an opportunity presenting itself for us to attempt the capture. We seldom saw one another, owing to the many rumours afloat that a conspiracy of some kind was being concocted in Washington for the purpose. *We had all arrangements perfected from Washington for the purpose* Boats were in readiness to carry us across the river.

One day we received information that the President would visit the



Seventh Street Hospital for the purpose of being present at an entertainment to be given for the benefit of the wounded soldiers. The report only reached us about three-quarters of an hour before the time appointed, but so perfect was our communication that we were instantly in our saddles on the way to the hospital. This was between one and two o'clock in the afternoon.

It was our intention to seize the carriage, which was drawn by a splendid pair of horses, and to have one of our men mount the box and drive direct for southern Maryland via Benning's Bridge. We felt ~~absolutely~~ confident that all the cavalry in the city could never overtake us. We were all mounted on swift horses, besides having a thorough knowledge of the country, it being determined to abandon the carriage after passing the city limits. Upon the suddenness of the blow and the celerity of our movements we depended for success. By the time the alarm could have been given and horses saddled we would have been on our way through southern Maryland toward the Potomac River.

To our great disappointment, however, the President was not there, but one of the Government officials--Mr. Chase, if I mistake not. We did not disturb him, as we wanted a bigger chase than he could have afforded us. It was certainly a bitter disappointment, but yet I think a most fortunate one for us. It was our last attempt. We soon after this became convinced that we could not remain much longer undiscovered, and that we must abandon our enterprise. Accordingly a separation finally took place, and I never saw any of the party except one, and that was when I was on my way from Richmond to Canada on business of quite a different nature ----about which presently.

Such is our story of our abduction plot----rash, perhaps foolish, but honourable, I maintain, in its means and ends; actuated by such motives as would, under similar circumstances, be a sufficient inducement to thousands of Southern young men to have embarked in a similar enterprise.

Shortly after our abandonment of the abduction scheme, some despatches came to me which I was compelled to see through to Richmond. They were foreign ones, and had no reference whatever to this affair. I accordingly left home for Richmond, and arrived there safely on the Friday evening before the evacuation of that city. On my arrival I sent to the Spotswood Hotel, where I was told that Mr. Benjamin, the then Secretant of War of the Confederate States, wanted ~~me~~ to see me. I accordingly sought his presence. He asked me if I would carry some despatches to Canada for him. I replied "Yes." That evening he gave me the despatches and \$200 in gold with which to pay my way to Canada. That was the only money I ever received from the Confederate Government or any of its agents. It may be well to remark here that this scheme of abduction was concocted without the ~~knowledge~~ ~~of~~ knowledge or the assistance of the Confederate Government in any shape or form. Booth and I often consulted together as to whether it would not be well to acquaint the authorities in Richmond with our plan, as we were sadly in want of money, our expenses being very heavy. In fact, the question arose among us as to whether, after getting Mr. Lincoln, if we succeeded in our plan, the Confederate authorities would not surrender us to the United States again, because of our doing this thing without their knowledge or consent. But we never acquainted them with the plan, and they never had anything in the wide world to do with it. In fact, we were jealous of our undertaking and wanted no outside help. I have not made this statement to defend the officers of the Confederate Government. They are perfectly able to defend themselves. What I have done myself I am not ashamed to let the world know. I left Richmond on Saturday morning before the evacuation of that place, and reached Washington the following Monday at ~~about 10 o'clock~~ 4 o'clock P. M., ~~April~~ April 3, 1865. As soon as I reached the Maryland shore I understood that the detectives knew of my trip South and were on the lookout for me. I had been South several times before for the Secret Service, but had never been caught. At that time I was carrying the despatches Mr. Benjamin gave me in a book entitled "The Life of John Brown." During my trip, and while reading



that book I learned to my utter amazement that John Brown was a ~~murderer~~ martyr sitting at the right hand of God. I succeeded in reaching Washington safely, and in passing up Seventh Street met one of our party, who inquired what had become of Booth. I told him where I had been; that I was then on my way to Canada, and that I had not seen or heard anything of Booth since our separation. In view of the fact that Richmond had fallen, and that all hopes of the abduction of the President had been given up, I advised him to go home ~~and~~ and go to work. That was the last time I saw any of the party. I went to a hotel and stopped over that night, as a detective had been to my house inquiring of the servant my whereabouts. In the early train next morning, Tuesday, April 4, 1865, I left for New York, and that was the last time I ever saw Washington until brought there by the U.S. Government a captive in ~~iron~~ irons--all reports to the contrary notwithstanding.

The United States, as you will remember, tried to ~~prove~~ prove my presence in Washington on April 14th, the day on which Mr. Lincoln met his death. Upon arriving in New York, I called at Booth's house, and was told by the servant that he had left that morning suddenly, on the ground of going to Boston to fulfil an engagement at the theatre. In the evening of the same day I took ~~the~~ the cars for Montreal, arriving there the next day. I put up at the St. Lawrence Hotel, registering myself as "John Harrison", ~~that~~ such being my first two names. Shortly afterward I saw General Edward G. Lee, to whom the despatches were directed, and delivered them to him. These despatches we tried to introduce as evidence on my trial, but his Honour Judge Fisher, ruled them out, despite the fact that the Government had tried to prove that they had relation to the conspiracy to kill Mr. Lincoln. They were only accounts of some money transactions---nothing more or less.

A week or so after my arrival there, General Lee came to my room, and told me he had a plan on foot to release the Confederate prisoners then in Elmira, N.Y. He said he had sent many parties there, but they always got frightened and only half executed their orders. He asked me if I would go there and take a stretch of the prison, find out the number of prisoners,

also minor details in regard to the number of soldiers on guard, cannon, small arms, etc. I readily accepted these new labours, owing to the fact that I could not return to Washington for fear of the detectives. The news of the evacuation of Richmond did not seem to disturb the general much in his plan, as he doubtless thought then that the Confederacy wanted men more than ever, no one dreaming that it was virtually at an end. I was much amused at one expression made use of by an ex-reb with regard to the suddenness of its demise: "D--n the thing, it didn't even flicker, but went right out!" In accordance with General Lee's order, I went to Elmira, arriving there on Wednesday, two days before Mr. Lincoln's death, and registered at the Brainard House, as usual, as "John Harrison." The following day I went to work, and made a complete sketch of the prison and surroundings. About ten o'clock on Friday night I retired, little thinking that on that night a blow would be struck which would forever blast my hopes, and make me a wanderer in a foreign land. I slept the night through, and came down the next morning little dreaming of the storm then brewing around my head. When I took my seat at the table about nine o'clock A. M., a gentleman to my left remarked: "Have you heard the news?" "No, I've not," I replied. "What is it?" "Why, President Lincoln and Secretary Seward have been assassinated."

I really put so little faith in what the man said that I made a remark that it was too early in the morning to get such jokes as that. "It's so," he said, at the same time drawing out a paper and showing it to me. Sure enough, there I saw an account of what he told me, but as no names were mentioned it never occurred to me for an instant that it could have been Booth or any of the party, for the simple reason that I never had heard anything regarding assassination spoken of during my intercourse with them.

I had good reason to believe that there was another conspiracy afloat in Washington. In fact we all knew it. One evening as I was partially lying down in the reading-room of the Metropolitan Hotel, two or three gentlemen came in and looked around as if to make sure that no one was around. They then commenced to talk about what had been done, the best means for the



expedition, etc. It being about dusk, and no gas lit, and I partially concealed behind a writing desk, I was an unwilling listener to what occurred. I told Booth of this afterward, and he said he had heard some thing to the same effect. It only made us all the more eager to carry out our plans at an early day for fear some one should get ahead of us. We didn't know what they were after, exactly, but we were well satisfied that their object was very much the same as ours.

Arising from the table I thought over who the party could be, for ~~that~~ at that time no names had been telegraphed. I was pretty sure it was none of the old party. I approached the telegraph office in the main hall of the hotel for purpose of ascertaining if J. Wilkes Booth was in New York. I picked up a blank and wrote "John Wilkes Booth," giving the number of the house. I hesitated a moment, and then tore the paper up, and then wrote one "J.W.B.," with directions, which I was led to do from the fact that during our whole connection we rarely wrote or telegraphed under our proper names, but always in a manner that no one could understand but ourselves. One way of Booth's was to send letters to me under cover to my quondam friend, Louis J. Weichmann. Doubtless you all know who Louis J. Weichmann is. They were sent to him because he knew of the plot to abduct President Lincoln. I proclaim it here and before the world that Louis J. Weichmann was party to the plan to abduct President Lincoln. He had been told all about it, and was constantly importuning me to let him become an active member. I refused, for the simple reason that I told him he could neither ride a horse nor shoot a pistol, which was a fact. These were two necessary accomplishments for us. My refusal nettled him some; so he went off, as it afterward appeared by his testimony, and told some Government clerk that he had a vague idea that there was a plan of some kind on hand to abduct ~~the~~ President Lincoln. This he says himself: that he could have spotted every man of the party. Why didn't he do it? Booth sometimes was rather suspicious

of him, and asked if I thought he could be trusted. I said, "Certainly he can. Weichmann is a Southern man." And I always believed it until I had good reason to believe otherwise, because he had furnished information for the Confederate Government, besides allowing me access to the Government's records after office hours. I have very little to say of Louis J. Weichmann. But I do pronounce him a base-born perjurer, a murderer of the worst hue! Gave me a man who can strike his victim dead, but save me from a man who, through perjury, will cause the death of an innocent person. Double murderer! Hell possesses no worse fiend than a character of that kind. Away with such a character! I leave him in the pit of infamy which he has dug for himself, a prey to the lights of his guilty conscience.

I telegraphed Booth thus:

"J.W.B., in New York:

"If you are in New York telegraph me.

"John Harrison, Elmira, N.Y."

The operator, after looking it over, said "Is it J.W.B.?" to which I replied "Yes." He evidently wanted the whole name, and had scarcely finished telegraphing when a door right near the office, and opening on the street, was pushed open, and I heard someone say: "Yes, there are three or four brothers of them, Junius Brutus, Edwin, and J. Wilkes Booth." The whole truth flashed upon me in an instant, and I said to myself: "My God! What have I done?" The despatch was still lying before me, and I reached over and took it up for the purpose of destroying it, but the operator stretched forth his hand and said: "We must file all telegrams." My first impulse was to tear it up, but I pitched it back and walked off. The town was in the greatest uproar, flags at half-mast, bells tolling, etc., etc.



Still I did not ~~##~~ think that I was in danger, and determined to go immediately to Baltimore to find out the particulars of the tragedy. But here I wish to say a few words concerning the register of the Brainard House. When my counsel, by my own direction, went to seek that register, it could not be found. Our inability to produce it on trial naturally cast a suspicion over our alibi. For weeks, months, did we seek to find its whereabouts, but to no purpose. Every man who was connected with the hotel was hunted up and questioned. Every register of the hotel before and after the one which ought ~~#~~to contain my name was to be found, but the most important one of all was gone. Now, the question is, what became of that register? The United States Government, by one of its witnesses, Dr. McMillan, knew in November, 1865, that I was in Elmira at the time of the assassination. They knew it, and they naturally traced me there to find out what I was doing. That some of the Government emissaries abstracted that register I firmly believe, or perhaps it is stored away in some of the other Government vaults, under charge of some judge in high position; but this is only a surmise of mine. But the circumstance involves a mystery of villainy which the All-Seeing God will yet bring to light. The dispatch I sent to Booth from Elmira it was also impossible to find. We had the operator at Washington during my trial, but he said the original was gone, though he had a copy of it. In telegraph offices they are compelled to keep all despatches filed. Of course we could not offer this copy in evidence, because the original alone would be accepted, and that had been made away with. So sure was the Government that they had destroyed all evidence of my sojourn in Elmira that, in getting me to Washington in time for Mr. Lincoln's death, they brought me by way of New York City; but so completely were they foiled in this that in their rebutting testimony they saw the absolute necessity of

having me go by way of Elmira, and they changed their tactics accordingly. That was enough to damn my case in any man's mind. This is a strange fact, but nevertheless true, that the Government, having in its possession this hotel register as well as my despatch to Booth, and knowing, moreover, by one of its witnesses, that I was in Elmira, yet tried to prove that I was in Washington on the night of Mr. Lincoln's death, "giving orders and commanding in general," as they were pleased to say. The gentlemen in Elmira, by whom I have proved my alibi, were men of the highest standing and integrity whose testimony the United States Government could not and dare not impeach. I left Elmira with the intention of going to Baltimore. I really did not comprehend at that time the danger I was in. As there was no train going south that evening, I concluded to go to Canandaigua and from there to Baltimore by way of Elmira and New York. Upon arriving at Canandaigua on Saturday eveing I learned to my utter disappointment that no train left until the Monday following, so I took a room at the Webster House, registering myself as "John Harrison." The next day I went to church, I remember, it being Easter Sunday. I can here safely say that the United States Government had not the remotest idea that I stopped anywhere after I left Elmira. They thought, when I left there, I went straight through to Canada. It was a very fortunate thing for me that I could not leave Canandaigua. Now, mark, ladies and gentlemen, if you please: My name was signed midway of the hotel register, with six other parties before and after. There was no doubt as to the genuineness of signature, because the very experts brought by the United States to swear to my signature in other instances, swore also that that was my handwriting. After all this, the register was ruled out by Judge Fisher, because he was well aware if he admitted it my trial was at an end. I could not be in two places at once, though they tried to make me so. Listen to his reason for so ruling! "The prisoner might have



stepped down from Canada to Canandaigua during his concealment and signed his name there for the purpose of protecting himself in the future." It was a likely idea that the proprietor of a hotel would leave a blank line in the register for my especial benefit! Need I say that the ruling was a most infamous one, and ought to damn the judge who so ruled as a villain in the minds of every honest and upright man. Had Judge Fisher been one of the lawyers for the prosecution, he could not have worked harder against me than he did. But, thanks to him, he did me more good than harm. His unprincipled and vindictive character was too apparent to every one in the court-room. I could not help smiling at the time to think of the great shrewdness and foresight he accorded me by that decision. At times, really, during my trial, I could scarce recognize any vestige of my former self. Sometimes I would ask myself: "Am I the same individual? Am I really the same John H. Surratt?" When that register was produced in court, the Hon. Judge Pierrepont, the leading counsel for the United States, became exceedingly nervous, especially when Mr. Bradley refused to show it to him, and he tore up several pieces of paper in his trembling fingers.

He evidently saw what a pitiful case he had, and how he had been made the dupe of his precious, worthy friend, Edwin M. Stanton. At the time of my trial the proprietor of the Webster House in Canandaigua could not find the cash-register of the hotel, in which there should have been an entry in favour of "John Harrison" for so much cash. When he returned to Canandaigua, my trial being then ended, he wrote to Mr. Bradley, and sent it to him. It was then too late. My trial was over. If we had had that cash-book at the time of my trial it would have proved beyond a doubt that I was in Canandaigua, and not in Washington city.

On Monday, when I was leaving Canandaigua, I bought some New

York papers. In looking ~~####~~ over them my eye lit on the following paragraph, which I have never forgot, and don't think I ever will. It runs thus: "The Assas in of Secretary Seward is said to be John H. Surratt, a notorious secessionist of Southern Maryland. His name, with that of John Wilkes Booth, will forever lead the infamous roll of assassina<sup>s</sup>." I could scarcely believe my senses. I gazed upon ~~###~~ my name, the letters of which seemed sometimes to grow as large as mountains and then to dwindle away to nothing. So much for my former connection with him, I thought. After fully realizing the state of the case, I concluded to change my course, and go direct to Canada.

I left Canandaigua on Monday at 12M., going to Albany, arriving there on Tuesday morning in time for breakfast. When I stepped on the platform at the depot at St. Albans, I noticed that one of the detectives scanned everyone, ~~####~~ head and foot, myself as well as the rest. Before leaving Montreal ~~for~~ Elmira I provided myself with an Oxford-cut jacket and round-top hat peculiar to Canada at that time. I knew my trip to Elmira would be a dangerous one, and I wished to pass myself off as a Canadian, and I succeeded in doing so, as was proved by my witnesses in Elmira. I believe that costume guarded me safely through St. Albans. I went in with the others and moved around, with the detectives standing there most of the time looking at us. Of course I was obliged to talk as loud as anybody about the late tragedy. After having a hearty meal I lighted a cigar and walked up town. One of the detectives approached me, stared me directly in the face, and I looked him quietly back. In a few moments I was speeding on my way to Montreal, where I arrived at two o'clock in the afternoon, going again to the St. Lawrence Hotel. Soon after I called on a friend, to whom I explained my former connection with Booth, and told him I was afraid the United States Government would suspect me of complicity in the assassination. He advised me to make myself scarce.



I immediately went to the hotel, got my things, and repaired to the room of a friend. When my friend's tea-time came I would not go to the table with him, but remained in the room. The ladies wanted to know why he did not bring his friend to tea with him. He replied that I did not want any. One of the ladies replied: "I expect you have got Booth <sup>in</sup> there." "Perhaps so," he answered laughingly. That was rather close guessing. At nightfall I went to the house of one who afterward proved to be a most devoted friend. There I remained until the evening of the next day, when I was driven out in a carriage with two gentlemen, both strangers to me. One day I walked out and saw Weichmann on the lookout for me. He had little idea that I was so near. One night, about eleven o'clock, my friend, in whose house I was, came to me and said, in a smiling way: "The detectives have offered me twenty thousand dollars if I will tell them where you are." "Very well," said I, "give me one-half and let them know." They suspected this gentleman of protecting me and they had really made him the offer. One day, about twelve o'clock I was told that they were going to search the house, and that I must leave immediately, which I did. They searched it before morning. This gentleman was a poor man, with a large family, and yet money could not buy him. I remained with this gentleman until I left Montreal, within a week or so afterward. The detectives were now hunting me very closely, and would have doubtless succeeded in capturing me, had it not been for a blunder on the part of my friend Weichmann. He had, it appears, started the detectives on the wrong track by telling them that I had left the house of Mr. Porterfield in company with some others and was going north to Montreal. Soon that section was swarming with detectives. I was not with the party, but about the same time, I too left Montreal in a hack, going some eight or more miles down the St. Lawrence River, crossing that stream in a small canoe. I was attired as a huntsman, At three o'clock Wednesday morning we arrived at our destination a small town

lying south of Montreal. We entered the village quietly, hoping that no one would see us.

It has been asserted over and over again, for the purpose of damning me in the estimation of every honest man, that I deserted her who gave me birth in the darkest hour of her need. Truly would I have merited the execration of every man had such been the case. But such was not the case. When I left Montreal there was no cause for uneasiness on my part, and upon my arrival in the country I wrote to my friends to keep me posted in regard to the approaching trial and to send me papers regularly. I received letters from them frequently, in all of which they assured me there was no cause for anxiety; that it was only a matter of time, and it would all be well. After a while the papers did not come so regularly, but those that did come spoke very encouragingly. Afterward when they came sentences were mutilated with ink and pen. I protested against such action, and for some time I received no papers at all. I became very uneasy, and wrote for publication an article signed by myself which I sent to Montreal to be forwarded for publication in the New York World. It is needless to say that it never went. Things continued in this way for some time, until I could stand the suspense no longer. I determined to send a messenger to Washington for that purpose, and secured the services of an intelligent, educated gentleman. I started him off immediately, I paying all the expenses. I gave him a letter to a friend of mine in Washington, with instructions to say to him to put himself in communication with the counsel for defense, and to make a correct report to me as to how the case stood - if there was any danger, and also to communicate with me if my presence was necessary, and inform me without delay, with an urgent request that he would see and inquire for himself how matters stood. He left me, and God <sup>Calone</sup> knows the suspense and anxiety of my mind during the days of his absence. I imagined and thought all kinds of things, yet I was powerless to act. At last he returned, and so



bright and cheerful was his countenance that I confess half my fears were dispelled. He represented everything as progressing well, and brought me this message from the gentlemen in Washington to whom I had sent him:

"Be under no apprehension as to any serious consequences. Remain perfectly quiet, as any action on your part would only tend to make matters worse. If you can be of any service we will let you know; but keep quiet."

These were the instructions I received from my friend in Washington in whom I felt the utmost reliance, and who, I thought, would never deceive. He also sent me copies of the National Intelligencer, containing evidence for the defense. I certainly felt greatly relieved, though not entirely satisfied. This news reached me some time in the latter part of June, just before the party of gentlemen of whom I have spoken arrived. They too, assured me there was no cause ~~for~~ <sup>for</sup> fear. What else could I do but accept these unwavering assurances? Even had I thought otherwise, I <sup>could</sup> not have taken action resulting in good.

Just on the eve of my departure to join a party of gentlemen on a hunting excursion, while I was waiting at the hotel for the train, the proprietor handed me a paper and said: "Read that about the conspirators."

Little did the man know who I was, or how closely that paragraph bore upon me ~~my~~ <sup>for</sup> mine. That paper informed me that on a day which was then present, and at an hour which then had come and gone, the most hellish of deeds was to be enacted. It had been determined upon and carried out, even before I had any intimation that there was any danger. It would be foolish for me to attempt to describe my feelings. After gazing at the paper for some time, I dropped it on the floor, turning on my heel, and went directly to the house where I had been stopping before. ~~When~~ When I entered the room I found my friend sitting there. As soon as he saw me he turned deadly pale, but never uttered a word. I

said: "You doubtless thought you were acting a friend - the part of a friend - toward me, but you have deceived me. I forgive you, but I can never forget it."

"We all thought it was for the best," he commenced to say, but I did not hear more. I went to my room, remained there until dark, and then signified my intention to leave the place immediately. I felt reckless as to what should become of me.

After visiting Quebec and other places, with a reward of \$25,000 hanging over my head, I did not think it safe to remain there, and so I concluded to seek an asylum in foreign lands. I had nothing now to bind me to this country save an only sister, and I knew she would never want for kind friends or a good home. For myself, it mattered little where I went, so I could roam once more a free man. I then went on a venture, and now, ladies and gentlemen, I go forth again on a venture. Gladly would I have remained hidden among the multitude, but the stern necessities arising from the blasting of my earthly prospects forced me to leave my solitude and to stand again before the public gaze as the historian of my own life. One mitigation to this distastefulness in this my first attempt, however, is the kindness with which I have been received and the patience with which I have been listened to, for which I <sup>return</sup> ~~thank~~ you, ladies and gentlemen, my sincere and heartfelt thanks.



# SURRATT AT PRAYER MEETING.

## A Clergyman's Experience With John Wilkes Booth's Accomplice.

"Here is a relic that contains much of especial interest to me," said Rev. Henry D. Moore to a Cincinnati *Times-Star* reporter as he unfolded an old poster upon his table that showed age, and that also indicated that it had been well taken care of.

"Look at it," said he, "and then I will tell you about an incident connected with it, still fresh in my memory, that occurred just twenty-five years ago." It was issued by the "War Department, Washington, April 20, 1865," offering "a reward of \$100,000," and stating in very large, bold type that "the murderer of our late beloved President, Abraham Lincoln, is still at large," and that "\$50,000 will be paid by this department for his apprehension, in addition to any rewards offered by municipal authorities or State executives. For the apprehension of John H. Surratt, one of Booth's accomplices, \$25,000 reward will be paid." For the apprehension of David C. Harold, another of Booth's accomplices, \$25,000 would be paid.

"Liberal rewards will be paid for any information that shall conduce to the arrest of either of the above named criminals or their accomplices. All persons harboring or secreting the said persons, or either of them, or aiding or assisting their concealment or escape, will be treated as accomplices in the murder of the President and the attempted assassination of the Secretary of State, and shall be subject to trial before a military commission and the punishment of death.

"Let the stain of innocent blood be removed from the land by the arrest and punishment of the murderers. All good citizens are exhorted to aid public justice on this occasion. Every man should consider his own conscience charged with this solemn duty, and rest neither night nor day until it be accomplished.

"EDWIN M. STANTON, Secretary of War."

Then followed a full description of Booth, Surratt and Harold, and at the bottom was "Notice—In addition to the above, State and other authorities have offered rewards amounting to almost \$100,000, making an aggregate of about \$200,000."

"It was just twenty-five years ago," continued Rev. Moore, "and a very rainy night, and the air was raw and chill. I was preaching in Portland, Me., and that night—it was the 21st of April, just one week after the assassination of the President, a young man who looked like he might be a Catholic priest walked into our prayer-meeting and took a back seat. I said to one of the deacons, 'Go and ask that young man back there to come further front.' He did so, but the young man, who seemed to be very diffident, remained where he was.

"After the meeting the young fellow waited, as though he wanted to speak to some one, and I stepped to where he was, shook hands with him, told him I was glad to see him at our meeting, and then asked him about himself. He said that Mrs. Moore had given him his supper, and directed him to the prayer meeting, and he wanted to thank me. He said he was being educated in a Catholic seminary in Illinois, and was on a mission to a monastery in Montreal, Canada. He would leave in the morning if he got a message that he was expecting. We walked out together, and when we reached my home I gave him an overcoat, for he seemed delicate and to be suffering with the cold. At first he refused to take the coat, but thanked me heartily for it after taking it, and said he would see me again unless he left in the morning.

"The next morning, which was Saturday, I read in the paper a description of Surratt, and it seemed very like that of the young man I had met the night before. As I went down to the Post Office I met the young man, and stopped and talked with him some minutes. He said he then expected to leave at noon. I immediately telegraphed to my brother, who was in a military hospital at Washington, to send me a picture of Surratt. This poster, with the likeness of Surratt, I received the next Monday morning. The likeness is very good. Surratt was rather prepossessing—tall, intelligent looking, and really looked, what he claimed to be, a priest.

"Surratt staid in Portland over Sunday but I did not see him till Monday. It was noon or after that I again met Surratt, with a friend whom he did not introduce to me. I new fully identified him and wanted to keep him. He said he would leave that night; that he was awaiting some letters. As they left me I met the deacon of my church and told him all about it, and we went together to the City Hall and gave information. They ascertained the little hotel he had been stopping at, and that he had gone to the Grand Trunk depot, but by the time the officers got to the depot the train was gone and Surratt and his friends were on it.

"The officers telegraphed the train, but to no purpose. When the conductor returned—he had but a short run, perhaps 100 miles—he said the two suspicious young fellows were on his train, but that they got off at a water station and before reaching the first telegraph station. Surratt afterwards escaped to Europe and became a member of the Pope's Zouaves, a body guard to the Pope, in Rome, but is now and has been for some years connected with a railroad office in the State of Maryland."

# Lincoln's Murder— Amazing Man Hunt

April 10, 1926

John Surratt, Papal Zouave, Accused of  
the Crime, Who Leaped for Liberty  
Over a Hundred-Foot Precipice

**W**HOSO sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed," ominously quoted the judge in his charge to the jury in the case of John Harrison Surratt, accused of the murder of Abraham Lincoln. Surratt had escaped to Canada and been concealed for five months by friendly priests: he then fled to Liverpool, London, Paris, Rome; was discovered in the Papal Zouaves and arrested by order of the Pope; he later escaped to Egypt; was arrested again, to be brought in chains on a gunboat to Washington; tried for his life, released, and then deserted by the Genius of Adventure.

This sounds like the synopsis of the strangest fiction, but it is what actually happened to Surratt, Confederate dispatch-bearer and spy, who was a party to the Lincoln abduction plots, and whose mother, Mary Surratt, paid the extreme penalty for her participation in these crimes.

The assassination of President Lincoln occurred sixty-one years ago this week. Testimony was offered at the trial of the conspirators in May, June, and July, 1865, to show that John Surratt had been in Washington on the morning of Friday, April 14, the fatal day, but in his lengthy and highly sensational trial, two years later, he established that he had been in Elmira, New York, arranging for a prison delivery of Confederate captives when John Wilkes Booth played his last tragic act in Ford's Theatre, Washington.

"At the breaking out of the war," said Surratt in telling his story to a Rockville, Maryland, audience in 1868, "I was a student at St. Charles College, in Maryland, but did not remain long there after that important event.

I left in July, 1861, and, returning home, commenced to take an active part in the stirring events of that period. I was not more than eighteen years of age, and mostly engaged in sending information regarding the movements of the United States Army stationed in Washington and elsewhere, and carrying dispatches to the Confederate boats

on the Potomac. We ran a regularly established line from Washington to the Potomac, and I being the only unmarried man on the route had most of the hard riding to do."

He then told of his meetings with John Wilkes Booth and the latter's proposition to kidnap President Lincoln and take him to Richmond. Surratt claims that although at first "amazed, thunderstruck, and in fact, I might say, frightened at the unparalleled audacity of the scheme," yet after two days' reflection, he concluded it to be practicable and "led on by a sincere desire to assist the South in gaining her independence," he told Booth that he was willing to try it. Then followed months of plotting to capture the President, plotting which failed.

In Surratt's own words: "One day we received information that the President would visit the Seventh Street Hospital for the purpose of being present at an entertainment to be given for the benefit of the wounded soldiers. The report reached us only about three-quarters of an hour before the appointed time, but so perfect was our communication that we were instantly in our saddles on the way to the hospi-

tal. This was between one and two o'clock in the afternoon. It was our intention to seize the carriage, which was drawn by a splendid pair of horses, and to have one of our men mount the box and drive direct for Southern Maryland via Benning's bridge. We felt confident that all the cavalry in the city could never overhaul us. We were all mounted on swift horses besides having a thorough knowledge of the country, it being determined to abandon the carriage after passing the city limits. Upon the suddenness of the blow and the celerity of our movements we depended for success. By the time the alarm could have been given and horses saddled, we would have been on our way through Southern Maryland toward the Potomac River.

"To our great disappointment, however, the President was not there, but one of the Government officials—Mr. Chase, if I mistake not . . . It was our last attempt."

Surratt stated further that the enterprise was then abandoned, and that soon afterward he was given Confederate dispatches to carry from Washington to Richmond, where he arrived on "Friday evening before the evacuation of that city." He left the next morning and again reached Washington "the following Monday," at four o'clock p.m., April 3, 1865. He claims that he left for New York the next day without having seen Booth, and that this was his last time in Washington "until brought there by the United States Government a captive in chains."

He attempted to see Booth in New York but was informed that the actor was in Boston. Surratt then proceeded to Montreal, and after remaining a week was instructed to proceed to Elmira, New York, to make sketches of the military prison and gather information that would aid in the release of the Confederates confined there. Surratt testified that he registered as "John Harrison" in Elmira on the Wednesday before the assassination, palmed himself off as a Canadian in an "Oxford cut jacket and a round-top hat, peculiar to Canada at that time," and remained there until Saturday, when he learned of the assassination and that it was rumored John Wilkes Booth was the assassin.

On the following Monday, after spending the week-end at Canandaigua, a village near Elmira, with the intention of going back to Baltimore, he bought some New York papers and was startled with: "The assassin of Secretary Seward is said to be John H. Surratt, a notorious secessionist of Southern Maryland. His name, with that of J. Wilkes Booth, will forever lead the infamous roll of assassins."

Montreal, not Baltimore, suddenly became his destination. Arriving in Montreal, which had become the home



or many Southerners, Surratt was secreted in the house of a friend where he remained until advised that his hiding place was suspected and the house was to be searched. He left immediately, but after the authorities had satisfied themselves that he was not there, he returned and remained until he left Montreal about a week later. Then as Charles Armstrong and disguised as a huntsman he hid in the home of Father Charles Bouchers, a priest in St. Liboire, a small town lying about 45 miles south of Montreal in a thinly settled territory.

During these days he naturally became greatly worried about the possible fate of his mother, who had been arrested and was being tried as one of the assassinations. He was assured by friends, however, that there was no cause for uneasiness and that any action on his part would only make matters worse.

These friends, he says, became frightened at the prospect of breaking the news of his mother's death sentence, and it was only by accident that, several hours after the death trap had been sprung, he procured a paper containing the news of her execution.

Surratt told his Rockville audience that after partly recovering from the effect of the shock he went to his room and remained there until dark; then signified his intention to leave the place immediately. "I felt reckless," he said, "as to what should become of me. After visiting Quebec and other places, with the reward of \$25,000 hanging over my head, I did not think it safe to remain there, and so I concluded to seek an asylum in foreign lands."

Father LaPierre (Surratt Trial Records—p. 908), a priest of Montreal, cared for Surratt from late in July until early in September, and then accompanied him to Quebec, where, disguised and under the pseudonym of McCarty, he placed him on board the *Peruvian*, bound for Liverpool. Convinced that there was an American detective on board, and bewildered by his own imagination, Surratt confessed to Dr. McMahan, the ship's physician, his true identity in an effort to obtain protection and advice.

Either feeling it was his duty or with a desire to collect the reward still offered for Surratt, the doctor, on September 26, informed the United States Consulate at Liverpool of the presence of the fugitive. The vice-consul conveyed this intelligence to Washington, but to his surprise, on October 13, received the following from the Acting Secretary of State:

"I have to inform you that, upon a consultation with the Secretary of War and Judge Advocate General, it is thought advisable that no action be taken in regard to the arrest of the supposed John Surratt at present."

The only explanation that has ever been given for this action, and the subsequent delays in apprehending Surratt, is that official Washington began to doubt whether the execution of Mrs. Surratt had been advisable and was not anxious to reawaken the storm that resulted from what many termed her "official murder."

After waiting until early in November for a vessel to be directed from Canadian friends, Surratt made his way to London and then to Rome by way of Paris, where after a few months, under the name of John Watson, he enlisted in the Papal Zouaves. This was during the war between Pope Pious IX and Garibaldi, and recruits were welcome in either camp.

By a strange coincidence, Henri St. Marie, a Canadian who had known Surratt three years before in Washington, had also become a Zouave and recognized him. Surratt appealed to St. Marie to keep his secret, but the latter succumbed to the temptation of the large reward. He (Continued on page 30)

2 EAST 54TH STREET · NEW YORK

---

- 13 **BLAIR, Montgomery.** Postmaster General in Lincoln's Cabinet. A.L.S.  
1 p., 4to. Chestnut Hill, Oct. 3, 1860. To James Stebler. \$10.00

FINE LETTER referring to the celebration of the Battle of Germantown and political prospects. He writes in part: "I am just starting to Germantown Pa. to speak there to morrow at the great Celebration of the Battle. I think there is little doubt of our carrying Pa. in Oct. & none whatever on 6 Nov. This will I think predispose people to listen to reason in Maryland & make our labors more effective. I will see that you have tickets for Nov."

- 14 **BLAIR, Montgomery.** D.S. 1 p., oblong folio. Washington, Sept. 10, 1862. \$10.00

The appointment of John H. Surratt as Postmaster at Surratts, Maryland. John Surratt was later to conspire with John Wilkes Booth to assassinate Lincoln.

*Madigan - 1940 (?)*



2585 S.W. Montgomery Dr.  
Portland, Oregon  
April 22, 1948

Dr. Lewis A. Warren  
Lincoln National Life Foundation  
Fort Wayne, Indiana

Dear Dr. Warren:

Thank you for your letter of March 31st.

With regard to the Suratt papers I seem to have, they are as follows:

- (1) A sort of an official pass, Provost Marshal's office, Charleston, Va., December 3, 1862: "Pass Jno. Suratt through guards and pickets to Piah, by order of W. H. Ward, per M.C. Captain and Provost Marshal." On the back is a notification stating that death is the penalty for fraudulently obtaining the pass, and a Captain Fitch's name.
- (2) A written pass, Post Headquarters, Gallipolis, O., August 9, 1863: "Guards will pass John H. Suratt and one lady to Buffalo, by order of W. H. Zimmerman, Capt. 23rd Ovi., Commanding Post, per Joe W. Messer, Acting Post Adjutant."

The most interesting piece, however, seems to be an official letter from the Qm. General's office, Washington City, August 16, 1864. It is indicated from this letter the reason why Suratt was antagonistic to the Lincoln administration. It tells of him working as a teamster, 11th Regiment, Ohio Volunteers, and refuses him pay. This is signed by an officer, by order of the Qm. General. There are also evidently offered in proof of his claim as teamster, lists of goods he hauled - very interesting because they give the price of those things in that period.

I hadn't thought of disposing of these, but I have no particular wish to retain them, and perhaps you would like to make an offer if you wish to purchase them. Or if you should be this way again, there is still the flag that allegedly flew over Lincoln when he made his Gettysburg address, and the dagger carried by Booth that I spoke to you of. These would be interesting, I should imagine, for you to look at and possibly pass judgment on.

Yours faithfully

*A. H. Blaker*

A. H. . Blaker

AHB:fmcc

Summit

April 30, 1948

Mr. A.H. Blaker  
2585 South West Montgomery Drive  
Portland, Oregon

My dear Mr. Blaker:

It would be very difficult indeed for us to appraise the manuscript you have in your possession, and I think we will have to leave it to you to value this.

If you care to submit the items for our approval and their valuations, we will then advise you whether or not we care to retain them.

With respect to the flag, there has recently been some effort to discover where this Gettysburg flag is located and I have taken the liberty to give your name to Mrs. Elizabeth W. King of the National Geographic Society, who will undoubtedly correspond with you with reference to it.

Very truly yours,

LAW:EB

Director



July 6, 1969

Joan Stevenson  
2397 SW Montgomery Dr.  
Portland, Ore., 97201

Dr. Louis A. Warren  
The Lincoln National  
Life Foundation  
Fort Wayne, Indiana

Dear Dr. Warren:

I have recently come across a letter from you to Mr. A. H. Blaker, dated April 30, 1948. I don't believe that he ever answered your letter regarding the Suratt papers which he still has in his possession. I would like to apologize for the extended delay. These documents have been hiding in his vault for the past twenty years.

The real reason the Suratts joined in the assassination of President Lincoln is made very clear in these official papers. There is a letter from the Quartermaster General's office, Washington City, dated August, 1864, regarding a settlement of wages due to John Suratt "for services rendered as -- Teamster" for which the Union did not pay. Also there is a receipt for goods delivered by Suratt to Charleston in 1862.

Included in these eight papers is the pass which passed John Suratt and "one lady," assumed to be his mother, through Union lines into Buffalo, dated August, 1863.

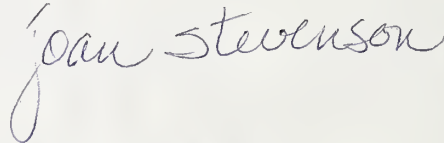
There is also a pass from the Provost Marshal's office, Charleston, Va., dated 1862, to pass John Suratt through Guards and Pickets to Piat, addressed to Captain Fitch with announcement that a person accepting this pass is pledged by his honor not to give help to an enemy of the United States, by penalty of DEATH.

The remaining four papers contain: a) two receipts of goods purchased in Gallipolis, Ohio, in December of 1864, and January of 1865; b) one receipt for goods shipped by order of Captain Fitch to, and signed by, Lt. Theo. Voges, dated at Pt. Pleasant, Va., October, 1862; c) and one receipt from Lebanon, Kentucky, October, 1865, telling the price of shipping these goods at that time.

These documents have never been made public, and I am in a position to offer them for sale at this time. They contain very interesting information which I feel that The Lincoln National Life Foundation should have.

I am told that \$15,000 is a reasonable price for these documents.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Joan Stevenson". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Joan Stevenson



Stevenson, Joan

July 9, 1969

Miss Joan Stevenson:  
2397 SW Montgomery Drive  
Portland, Oregon 97201

Dear Miss Stevenson:

Your letter addressed to Dr. Louis A. Warren and dated July 6th has been brought to my attention. Dr. Warren retired in July, 1956.

I have read with interest your description of the Surratt papers. Am I correct in assuming that the collection consists of eight papers?

This material you describe is quite desirable and valuable to a Lincoln collection or collector; however, our budget is such that we could never consider your \$15,000 price tag for the documents.

Yours sincerely,

R. Gerald McMurtry

RGM/cvrv

August 18, 1969

Joan Stevenson  
2397 SW Montgomery Dr.  
Portland, Ore., 97201

Dr. R. Gerald McMurtry  
The Lincoln National  
Life Foundation  
Fort Wayne, Indiana

Dear Dr. McMurtry:

After receiving your letter of July 9, 1969, I postponed answering it because of a procrastinating nature which I possess. Mr. Blaker advised me immediately to write to you and ask if you would be willing to make an offer for the documents. I have had very little experience with this type of work and was unaware of how important an early response would be. Please forgive me for this delay.

The Suratt collection about which I have written does consist of eight papers, however, four of these are not directly connected with the Suratt case. They have been placed with the Suratt papers as an indication of the prices of goods, transportation of goods, etc., prevalent in those days, and are of that period.

Will you be good enough to advise me of the amount that The Lincoln National Life Foundation would be willing to pay for these documents.

Sincerely,

*Joan Stevenson*  
Joan Stevenson

August 21, 1969

Miss Joan Stevenson  
2397 SW Montgomery Drive  
Portland, Oregon 97201

Dear Miss Stevenson:

I have your letter of August 8th relative to the four Surratt papers you have mentioned in recent correspondence.

We do not appraise items that are offered to us for sale. Neither do we attempt to evaluate items that we have never seen.

While you may have some valuable papers, I do not think that we could negotiate a deal if your first asking price is \$15,000.

Our budget is very limited and we would rather place our funds in Lincoln manuscripts and early published items.

Yours sincerely,

R. Gerald McMurtry

RGM/cvrv



# Holy See handed over fugitive in Lincoln death

WASHINGTON (AP)—There is historical precedent for the Vatican agreeing to turn over a fugitive to the United States, although the Holy See maintains it cannot surrender ousted strongman Gen. Manuel Antonio Noriega from its embassy in Panama.

The Vatican adopted an entirely different position when asked to turn over one of the suspected conspirators in the 1865 assassination of President Abraham Lincoln, John H. Surratt Jr.

Surratt, a young Confederate spy who had conspired with John Wilkes Booth to abduct Lincoln in 1864, fled after Booth shot Lincoln on April 14, 1865.

Surratt, a devout Catholic, changed his name to John Watson and joined Pope Pius IX's Zouaves Regiment in late 1865 or early 1866. The unit was part of the army that defended the Papal States, at that time an independent country about the size of West Virginia, against claims by Italian na-

tionalists.

Surratt was located in 1866 with the help of an informer who recognized him and reported to U.S. authorities, whereupon Secretary of State William Seward notified Secretary of War E.M. Stanton.

"As we have no treaty of extradition with the papal government, it is proposed that a special agent be sent to Rome to demand the surrender of Surratt," Seward wrote Stanton on May 28, 1866.

Accordingly, the U.S. envoy to the Vatican, Rufus King, sought a meeting with the Pope's foreign minister, Cardinal Antonelli, to tell him about Surratt.

"His Eminence was greatly interested by it, and intimated that if the American government desired the surrender of the criminal, there would probably be no difficulty in any way," King wrote Seward on Aug. 8.

Several months later, having ascertained that Watson was indeed the

fugitive Surratt, Seward instructed King to ask the cardinal "whether His Holiness (the Pope) would now be willing, in the absence of an extradition treaty, to deliver John H. Surratt upon authentic indictment and at the request of this department, for complicity in the assassination of the late President Abraham Lincoln."

So eager was the Vatican to help the United States that it did not even wait for an official request and ordered Surratt arrested immediately.

The Surratt and Noriega cases are similar in that the Vatican still doesn't have an extradition treaty with the United States—or Panama—but the two incidents differ in another significant way.

In the present instance, the Vatican says its embassy can't, under international law, give up an asylum-seeker to a third country—the United States. It can only give up Noriega to Panama, the Vatican says, if it decides Noriega

doesn't qualify as a political asylum case.

Surratt's case didn't end with papal cooperation, however, for the fugitive proved to be wilier and more agile than the six men sent to escort him from his regiment to Rome on Nov. 8, 1866.

The arresting officer reported to his superiors that Surratt, alias Watson, "leapt from a height of 23 feet on a very narrow rock," landed on a garbage heap, and disappeared.

Surratt eventually was tracked down in Alexandria, Egypt, and a U.S. warship brought him back to the United States.

Surratt's mother, Mary, who ran a boarding house that Booth and his co-conspirators had used as a meeting place, was hanged along with three other group members.

Surratt was tried by a civil court in Washington in 1867. He was freed by a hung jury.



